



Review rules out fresh measures after fatal accident

NO NEW ACTION ON POOL SAFETY

Report by Richard Guttridge

A POOL at a nature reserve in Dudley where a father drowned will not get new safety measures, Dudley Council has ruled.

A safety review was launched at the Fens Pool Nature Reserve's Middle Pool in Pensnett following the tragic death of Deon Mullings during a family picnic last July.

The 35-year-old, from Holly Hall, Dudley, had been playing ball games with his daughters at the beauty spot but failed to resurface after going into the water to retrieve a ball.

A schoolboy also had to be rescued from the pool in 2011 after falling 25ft down a bank.

Children regularly play beside the water and it was considered whether better protection was needed but bosses this week said changes would not be made at the council-managed site.

Environmental officer Matt Williams said: "The council has undertaken a review of safety at Fens Pool Nature Reserve, in conjunction with the coroner's report, which returned a verdict of accidental death."

Dangers

"The review found that there is no need to implement additional measures on site, however, the council will continue to build on its annual educational campaign which warns of the dangers related to open water."

Pensnett councillor John Martin said there was only so much the council could do but he believes signs around the nature reserve need to be made clearer.

He said: "Over the years sadly there have been fatalities. While I wouldn't want to see measures that spoil the beauty of the reserve and restrict access, I do think the council could introduce more safety signage, particularly around the pools."

"A lot of people who visit the area for the first time are beguiled by how beautiful and how calm the water actually is. They are surprised by how it becomes very deep very quickly."

Father-of-four Mr Mullings was pulled from the water by rescue divers and taken to Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth Hospital, but could not be saved.

WE'RE ONLY HERE FOR THE BEER... AND CIDER



Organisers John Midwood, left, Tony Morgan with two of the beers that will feature at the Stourbridge Beer Festival this weekend

ORGANISERS of Stourbridge Beer Festival are preparing for the 19th annual celebration of local beers and breweries in Stourbridge Town Hall.

Despite pub closures, the wider range of beers on offer from local breweries shows that the beer scene is still thriving.

The festival, hosted by Stourbridge and Halesowen branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), opened for members only last night (Wednesday) but is open to the general public today, tomorrow and Saturday.

It will feature beers from all around the

country but also local favourites. Organiser John Midwood said: "The festival is good for the area. CAMRA are trying to stop pubs being turned into supermarkets. There are quite number of new breweries popping up."

The beers have been selected by connoisseurs Matt Merrick and blogger Roberto Ross. Brews from the local area will include Holden's Woodsetton Pale and Sadler's Ales from Lye, alongside Angel Ales from Halesowen, Black Country's Chain Ale and Fireside from Gornal, Craddock's Crazy Sheep from Stourbridge, Enville Brewery's Ginger, Old Porter

and revived Simpkins. Also on offer will be three beers from Halesowen's Fixed Wheel brewery, an oatmeal porter and American style ale from Fownes in Sedgley, three beers from Green Duck in Stourbridge, and three from the Kinver brewery.

Pig Iron from Brierley Hill will also be represented as will Websters of Wollaston.

If you prefer booze from the orchard, there are 25 ciders and perries chosen by cider expert Lizzie Ralph.

For more information visit www.stourbridgebeerfest.org.uk



HAPPY BIRTHDAY YOUR MAJESTY 90 TODAY

CUTS

Bowls and croquet fees set to rocket

A CUT in funding for the maintenance of bowling greens and croquet lawns in Dudley could see player fees rocket.

Dudley Council provides £79,000 a year to help look after greens and lawns in the area but this funding looks likely to be cut under cost-cutting plans. The council is in talks with many of the borough's clubs over how the greens and lawns will be maintained in the wake of cuts.

Talks of the clubs entering a lease arrangement to enable them to access funding not available to the council or undertaking asset transfer are among options proposed.

DEVELOPMENT

Move for 250 homes on site of brickyard

UP to 250 homes are proposed on a former brickyard in Pensnett.

The plans to overhaul the Ibstock Brick site in Tansey Green Road have been unveiled and councillors have hailed the move to bring the derelict site back to life.

A statement submitted as part of the plan says the scheme is a 'high quality residential development'.

Developers London and Cambridge Properties Ltd and Ibstock Brick Ltd hope to build up to 250 homes.

Dudley Council planners will rule on the outline application at a later date.

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MP calls for progress at former school

AN MP has urged Dudley Council and Birmingham Met College to get a move on with plans to re-vamp a derelict former school site in Stourbridge.

MP Margot James has called on the two organisations to speed up the long-awaited overhaul of the arson-hit Longlands site.

Ms James said she has pushed all the parties to act now that a developer has been chosen to drive forward plans for the site.

Conservative MP Ms James said: "I can now pass on that the council and site owners Birmingham Metropolitan College (B-Met) and working towards concluding a legal agreement with the proposed developer."

"Progress has been very slow, as is unfortunately often the case in major projects like this one."

"I have been reassured that the work on the site over the past week is merely a routine site investigation, which is an essential pre-requisite for development and submission of a planning application to the local authority by the developer."

"Any application will have to go through all the normal planning process and will include consultation with local residents."

Ms James added that she had also asked the council for clarification on recent groundworks that have taken place, which have been noticed by many residents who live nearby.

The former school opened in 1912 and during the 1990s merged with High Park School. The buildings were brought back into use by Stourbridge College, which later merged with B-Met, before closing after the opening of a £12 million complex in Brierley Hill.

Arsonists started two fires at the old school and security was stepped up last year.

Ms James said in January that 'firm commitments' had been made for the Longlands site to retain as many of the historic buildings as possible.

Campaigners launched an appeal in 2014 for urgent action to tackle derelict buildings at the former school, after vandalism.

'Callous' hit and run driver sent to prison

A 'CALLOUS' disqualified driver who left a schoolgirl fighting for her life after mowing her down on a pedestrian crossing has been jailed for 33 months.

Adnan Ajram, who was electronically tagged, had been out with his girlfriend and was late back for a 10pm curfew when he overtook a car in Grange Lane, Stourbridge on December 17, and struck the teenager, a court heard.

Claudia Visser, aged 15, was seriously injured when hit by Ajram's Volkswagen Passat. He failed to stop and later abandoned the car.

The court heard that earlier that day the 24-year-old car valet had attended a 'thinking skills' session as part of his sentence for a previous driving offence.

Hannah Grove, a witness to the collision, said Ajram had overtaken her in a 30mph zone and was doing around 45-50mph as he approached the pedestrian crossing outside Pedmore Technology College.

Claudia, who had been out with friends celebrating the last day of the school term before Christmas, tried to step back onto the pavement.

The court heard she suffered a fractured skull, bleeding to the brain, both legs broken, wrist and collar bone fractures, and damage to her spleen.

She was hospitalised for seven weeks and still uses a wheelchair, although she can walk short distances with crutches.

When arrested, Ajram claimed his girlfriend had been driving and texted her telling her not to speak to police.

He made a 'heartfelt apology' for everything he had put Claudia's family through.

Judge Nicolas Webb told the defendant: "You are a callous and dishonest young man with no regard for the law and only interested in your own selfish ends."

Ajram, of Careless Green, Lye, pleaded guilty to causing serious injury by dangerous driving. He was also disqualified for driving for four years and ordered to pay a £120 victim surcharge.

Pc Karl Davies, of the collision investigation unit, said the family believed that the sentence could never be a true reflection of Claudia's long road to recovery.

Name is clear winner at glass museum



Front from left, Will Farmer, Mayor Councillor Steve Waltho and Graham Fisher reveal the name of the glass museum

A NEW glass museum in Wordsley will open later this year – and its name has been revealed.

Bosses said the £5.5 million attraction, which is nearing completion, will be known as the White House Cone – Museum of Glass after the title was picked by members of the public.

The British Glass Foundation said the name, suggested by former Dudley borough councillor Lynn Boleyn, summed up how they hoped to portray the venue.

Graham Fisher, spokesman for the foundation, said: "This name is an encapsulation of the history of the Stourbridge glass industry, where it's located and what we hope to achieve in the future – it says it all."

Will Farmer, from Fieldings Auctioneers in Stourbridge, chaired a meeting at the Red House Glass Cone when the decision on the name was made.

Work to build the museum on the former Stuart Crystal factory

site in Camp Hill, opposite the cone, is reaching the final stages.

Mr Fisher said it is on track to be officially opened to the public in June.

To launch the attraction there will be a selection of 'pop-up' exhibitions and visitors will be able to see glass artist Allister Malcolm in action as the borough's glass collection is moved in.

It is set to replace the now closed Broadfield House Glass Museum in Kingswinford.

Arrests are made after masked men strike twice

A CASHIER was threatened with a gun hidden in a bag as armed robbers struck two shops in Stourbridge within minutes.

Officers were alerted to a robbery at Tesco Express in Platts Road, Ambecote, just before 10.30pm on Monday, where it is believed a cashier was threatened with a firearm concealed inside a bag.

The masked men had struck just minutes earlier at a Co-Op store in The Broadway, Norton, less than two miles away, entering the store wearing balaclavas and demanding money.

A quantity of cash taken from both locations.

Thanks to a quick-thinking witness who noted down the getaway car's registration plate after the Tesco robbery, police were able to track the vehicle, believed to be a Vauxhall Zafira, to Bedcote Place around 11pm.

The driver, a 27-year-old man, was arrested while a 25-year-old man was detained nearby, and a cash till and clothing were recovered from the vehicle.

Both are currently being held in police custody on suspicion of robbery.

Detective Sergeant Kerrie Scriven, said: "We had the men in custody just 30 minutes after the robberies being reported to us and that's thanks largely to the swift actions of a witness who took down the getaway car's details."

"No-one was injured at either store but understandably staff who were threatened have been left badly shaken."

Entries invited for Black Country Run

RUNNERS are being invited to get in training to enter the 2016 Black Country Run being held in Halesowen.

The 10km road race is taking place on July 3 at 9am and is being organised by Halesowen and Rowley Regis Rotary Club.

More than 1,100 took part in the event in 2015 and entries can be made online at www.theblackcountryrun.com website.

There will also be a 5km fun run taking place on the same day, at 11.30am.

A total of £27,000 for charities was raised by runners last year bringing the total amount now raised since the inaugural event in 2012 to more than £77,000.

Chance to raise issues with police

A POLICE team is urging residents to raise any issues they have about crime at a community meeting this evening (Thursday). The team that covers Stourbridge town, Pedmore and Wollaston, is hosting the meeting at Stourbridge Library from 6pm.

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Councillor is stripped of role on authority

A COUNCILLOR suspended from the party pending the outcome of a police probe has been stripped of his role on the authority after failing to attend meetings for six months.

Councillor Derrick Hemingsley, Labour, who represents Wordsley, was suspended from the party at the end of last year but will now lose his title as a councillor under the terms of the Local Government Act.

Philip Tart, council strategic director for resources and transformation, said: "Councillor Hemingsley's term of office will end on April 21 in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972, as he took the decision to absent himself from council meetings for personal reasons."

Councillor Hemingsley is on police bail. Police confirmed a 55-year-old man had been arrested in Penzer Street, Kingswinford, on November 6, on suspicion of grooming.

Flags to fly in Netherton to remember Ivor

PLANS to erect a 20ft high flagpole in the centre of Netherton in memory of a community stalwart are set to go ahead.

The towering pole is to be placed next to the Titanic Anchor and has been recommended for approval by Dudley Council planners.

The scheme is in memory of Netherton legend Ivor Lucas, who died in September 2014.

Ward councillor Elaine Taylor said: "We wanted to pay tribute to Ivor who was a strong part of the community and very respected. We're very proud of this idea and where it will be situated is absolutely ideal."

Members of the public will be able to pay a small fee to fly the flag for their own cause on any given day.

Mr Lucas's daughter Fiona, 52, said she was delighted the scheme looks to have the council's backing. Her father was the chairman of Friends of Netherton Park and the Netherton Regeneration Group.

She added: "I think this is the perfect idea."

Shakespeare songs for young singers

A YOUTH Showcase concert on Saturday will feature the choirs of Elmfield School and Old Swinford Hospital with the Summerhill Choral Society, Kingswinford, marking 400 years since Shakespeare's death and St George's Day.

Tickets are £9 for the concert at St James's Church in Wollaston at 7.30pm. Free for under-18s.

Surgery rated inadequate by inspectors



Quarry Road Surgery in Dudley Wood

A GP surgery in Dudley Wood has been rated inadequate by healthcare inspectors.

Quarry Road Surgery, on Quarry Road, which has more than 2,500 registered patients, was described as inadequate in its safety and management service, and has been told it requires improvement.

Another inspection will take place in six months and if progress is not considered sufficient it could face closure.

The practice has 2,670 patients registered under a General Medical

Services contract with NHS England.

The inspection took place on February 10 led by a Care Quality Commission inspector, GP specialist advisor, a CQC nurse advisor and a second inspector.

Key findings reported that incidents were managed effectively but not formally recorded, governance arrangements were not robust and the practice was not operating an effective system with regards to monitoring high risk medicines.

The Inspectors observed a friendly at-

mosphere throughout the surgery, noting that members of staff were courteous and helpful and that people were treated with dignity and respect.

But the surgery was found not to follow key protocols effectively and governance arrangements were not always robust.

Pam Bradbury, chair of Healthwatch Dudley, said: "Although this report is of concern to us we are confident the CQC is monitoring the recommendations and we will support them and Dudley CCG to enable improvements to be made."

Hospital investigates baby name tag blunder

THE boss of Dudley's Clinical Commissioning Group has called on the town's Russells Hall Hospital to conduct a thorough review after parents said their newborn baby was sent home with the wrong name tag.

Gemma Evans and Zeke Tennan feared they had taken home somebody else's child when the tag was discovered on baby Tyler Evans' foot at his home in Netherton.

Russells Hall has launched an investigation following the blunder and Dr David Hegarty, chairman of the CCG, which plans and buys health services in Dudley, said: "I can only imagine how distressing this is for the family of baby Tyler Evans.

"I am sorry to hear about this incident and understand the level of trust that the family placed on Russells Hall Hospital has not been met.

"This will be investigated thoroughly and the CCG is calling on the hospital management to review all aspects of this service, so that they can give assurance to Dudley people on the quality and safety of care being provided."

Gemma Evans said she was gripped by panic when she noticed the tag and had to double-check that it was her son Tyler.

Shocked

She criticised the hospital and said she could easily have taken home the wrong child.

Tyler was born on April 7 and was kept in until last Tuesday when he was discharged.

It was only later that day while changing him that Miss Evans, aged 26, noticed he still had his nametag attached – and to her horror that it had the wrong name on.

She said: "I was changing him and I realised he had the wrong nametag on his foot.

"I was shocked and angry, I just couldn't believe it.

"He could have gone home with the wrong family and we could have lost him.

"I was kind of panicking and I did think for a minute 'have I got the right baby?'"

"How can they make such a mistake? When the baby is being released how can they not check the name tag before the baby is taken home?"

Miss Evans said she and her partner Zeke Kennan, 21, had more serious concerns about whether their son had been mistaken for another child while undergoing tests in hospital.

He was kept in following his birth via a caesarian because of a chest infection.



Parents Gemma Evans and Zeke Tennan feared they had taken home somebody else's child when the wrong name tag was discovered on baby Tyler Evans' foot when they got home to Netherton

"She said: "What if they got the blood mixed up too – did he even have an infection?"

"He seems alright at the moment but we have still got to get him checked out. I'm really worried now."

Paula Clark, chief executive, of Dudley Group NHS Trust, which runs Russells Hall, said an investigation had been launched.

She said: "We take the safety and security of babies born and cared for at our hospital extremely seriously.

"We are undertaking a thorough investigation into concerns raised by the family of Tyler Evans.

"Unfortunately we are unable to comment further until the facts have been established and the investigation has concluded."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Glass expert talks about unique art

EXPERT Ian Dury will be giving an insight into a unique piece of Stourbridge's glassmaking heritage that was until recently thought lost.

He will be speaking at an event hosted by Amblesote History Society about the famous crystal Madonna, a two foot tall glass sculpture designed in the 1960s by Valerie Mole. Commissioned by the Bishop of Worcester, it was believed lost until discovered in a corner at Hartlebury Castle.

The talk on May 11 is at 7.30pm in the Lehr Theatre at the Ruskin Glasshouse Arts Centre. Admission is £2.

Woman seriously injured in smash

AN 18-year-old woman was seriously injured in a car accident in Stourbridge on Saturday. Police were called to Hagley Road, Oldswinford, just before 12.20am after reports of a blue Ford Focus hitting a wall.

The woman's condition in hospital was described as serious but stable. PC Chris Ridge said: "We are keen to speak to people who may have seen the blue Focus and a silver Renault Clio travelling along the A491 Hagley Road towards Bromsgrove."

Call police on 101 or anonymously on 0800 555 111.

56,000 treated at urgent care centre

MORE than 50,000 patients have been treated at an urgent care centre since it opened 12 months ago to take pressure off the busy accident and emergency unit at Russells Hall Hospital.

The site replaced the walk-in centre at Holly Hall in Dudley. Since it opened in April last year, more than 120,000 people have been through the doors. Of these, 56,000 have attended the urgent care service for assessment and treatment.

Tug boats return for museum's canal event

TUG boats will be chugging their way to the Black Country Living Museum in Dudley for a boating extravaganza next weekend.

Tug boats were an essential part of the canal network across the West Midlands, and a driving force in the industrial revolution. Visitors over the May Day bank holiday weekend (April 30 to May 2) will be able to see the old boats in action.

For more information visit the www.bclm.com website.

Vintage vinyl at fair

A VINTAGE vinyl records and craft fair is being held at a Stourbridge visitor attraction next month.

The fair will be taking place in the Ruskin Glass Centre in Wollaston Road, Amblesote, on Sunday, May 8, 11am to 4pm, featuring a variety of stalls.

It's time to put your foot down on fungal nail infection!

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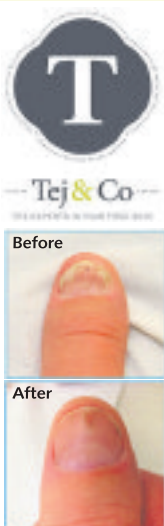
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"WHAT'S an ansadoo?" Question asked by a reader's small child on first hearing the song: "Daisy, Daisy, give me your answer, do"

HERE'S a prediction for the 21st century. Before long, in the endless, unchallenged quest to know everything about everything, geneticists will unveil the first DNA map of the entire UK population. Our family trees will be unveiled in vast strands stretching back many generations and, for the first time, we will know exactly who is related to whom. And, boy will there be some surprises. If it can happen to the Archbishop of Canterbury . . .

SUMMER approaches, the garden goes mad. So, on a whim and for the first time in many years, I tuned into The Archers, just to see if they had any topical horticultural tips. Not a chance. It seems to be mostly about killing imperfect husbands. I'm not angry. I'm just disappointed. . . .

THINGS to do on a rainy day. The Government pro-EU leaflet is snappily entitled "Why the Government believes that voting to remain in the European Union is the best decision for the UK." A reader tells me that with skilful use of a black marker pen he has retitled the leaflet: "Government lie: voting to remain in the EU is the best decision for the UK."

JEREMY Corbyn, who voted against the Common Market in 1975 and against the Lisbon Treaty, is trying to convince the



British people that he really, really supports the EU now. If nothing else, Jez is giving our fellow Europeans a lesson in colloquial English by demonstrating that useful term "lukewarm".

SO who was the villain and whose vested interests were being served by this week's disclosure that Tory media minister John Whittingdale went out with a dominatrix? Was it the pressure group Hacked Off, out to take a newspaper scalp? Was it the wicked Press, out to blackmail the minister? Or was it the BBC, eager to pile on pressure to keep the TV licence? This is an issue involving that old concept "the public interest." But the real public interest, the question that will not go away, the burning issue that Joe Public wants answering, is nothing to do with the Beeb, the Press or Hacked Off. It is simply this: How do you go out with a woman for six months and not know she is a dominatrix? I think we should be told.

THE Lib-Dems are campaigning to save Britain's surviving 3,000 launderettes from redevelopment. A reader says it's only spin.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Floor heating just the bear necessities

A BEAR at Dudley Zoo has celebrated its 36th birthday – ten years older than its species tends to live in the wild.

Asiatic black bear Inca can now celebrate with more than the bear necessities, as Inca is set to get new underfloor heating in the outdoor area of her enclosure.

Section leader, Jay Haywood, said: "Inca is in such good condition for

her age. She's got more than 10 years on the typical life expectancy for a wild Asiatic black bear and continues to amaze us, passing her yearly thorough health checks with flying colours.

"She's definitely slowing down now, but who can blame her – she is the official title holder for the oldest Asiatic black bear in Europe – but she still manages to get to her favourite

spot at the top of her climbing frame for a snooze in the sunshine."

Inca started life as part of a five-strong group of bears at the zoo in the 1990s.

However, they had to be separated because two in the group did not bond. Inca and Gretel moved to a new home in Glasgow in 1997. After more than five years in Scotland they moved to Dudley in 2003.



Asiatic black bear Inca at Dudley Zoo

Masked robbers grab cash in raid on Aldi

By David Callaghan

MASKED raiders assaulted two Aldi employees in Netherton and made off with cash in one of the worker's cars.

The three raiders approached the workers just after they had finished locking up at around 11.30pm on Tuesday, April 12.

The robbers forced them to open the doors before making off with 'a quantity' of cash in a white Ford Fiesta belonging to one of the workers.

Neither of the employees were seriously hurt.

The supermarket is on the corner of Saltwells Road and Halesowen Road and detectives are appealing for any witnesses to come forward.

Local councillor Bryan Cotterill called the incident 'absolutely appalling'.

He said: "We are living in very dangerous times, I was only in the store myself in the day on Tuesday.

"Whether this kind of behaviour is down to lack of a physical police force on the streets, I just don't know, but I hope they are doing everything they can to catch the culprits."

Second

This is the second serious incident in less than two years after three masked men armed with machetes carried out a robbery at the store in September 2014, leaving one female member of staff with minor injuries.

Back then the robbers burst into Aldi and threatened staff with the weapons before leaving with a quantity of cash in a waiting car and heading toward Cradley Heath.

A woman worker suffered a cut to her hand during the raid and was treated by paramedics.

Councillor Qadar Zada has also called the incidents 'outrageous' and called for swift action by the police to be taken.

Anyone with information is asked to call police on 101 or they can call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Blooming lovely project launched



Launching Quarry Bank in Bloom are Councillor Bryan Cotterill and Pat Keys

'IT will brighten up the High Street and have a positive knock-on effect on the local economy.'

Those are the words of Quarry Bank in Bloom chairman Councillor Bryan Cotterill as the Quarry Bank's first In Bloom project was launched.

Councillor Cotterill drew up plans to brighten up the High Street with floral displays last year and now the scheme has officially been launched.

He has high hopes it will transform the centre of Quarry Bank, helping to improve trade.

The new committee's efforts will be judged later this year, after the scheme has been funded thanks to a £5,000 grant from Dudley Council.

He said: "I had this idea about 12 months ago because I just thought Quarry Bank High Street leant itself to an event such as In Bloom.

Railings

"We've now been officially recognised by England In Bloom and we expect the judging to take place sometime in July.

"We are going out to all the traders and giving them plans of where the blooms will be. There won't be any hanging baskets, as all the blooms will be on railings or free-standing. It will brighten up the High Street and hopefully that has a positive knock-on effect on the local economy."

He added: "We're all very excited about it and I'm delighted – there has been a lot of hard work put in by the committee since September."

Libraries to be mutuals run by own communities

DUDLEY Council has rubber-stamped 'historic' plans which will see the borough's libraries run by volunteers at board level.

These services will now be run as a not-for-profit 'mutual' as part of the authority's drive to save cash in the wake of Government cuts.

All libraries, library links and the archive service will remain open with the new combined service less reliant on council funding. That means a council saving of 11 per cent in 2016-17 rising to 30 per cent by 2017-18.

Councillors unanimously waved through the plans at a meeting on Monday.

Councillor Rachel Harris, cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said the mutual scheme marked 'a new era' for the borough.

Solution

She told the full council meeting: "This is an absolutely historic occasion for this council. It marks the end of a very long and hard journey. It's the start of a new era which I'm positive will be a solution for keeping vibrant libraries and archive services here in Dudley. This happens in the face of rapidly decreasing resources.

"We are becoming an exception in Dudley, as councils across the country are cutting back further and further."

The libraries and archives service will continue to be run by professional staff but have community, employee and council involvement at board level.

Finding out more about diabetes

RESIDENTS from Dudley are invited to find out their risk of getting Type 2 diabetes at a Diabetes UK roadshow in town today (Thursday).

The Know Your Risk Roadshow, delivered by Diabetes UK in partnership with Tesco, will be in Market Place, Dudley, between 9am and 4.30pm.

Members of the public can visit to find out their risk free of charge. All they need to do is answer some simple questions and have their height, weight and waist measured.

Peter Shorrick, Diabetes UK Midlands regional head, said: "In the UK, 11.9 million people are at increased risk of developing Type 2 diabetes and in Dudley there are around 16,000 people living with Type 2 diabetes."

For more information visit www.diabetes.org.uk website.

Apartments planned at Quarry Bank site

FOURTEEN apartments will be built near a busy roundabout in Quarry Bank.

The homes would be built at the corner of Thorns Road and Caledonia, under plans submitted to Dudley Council by Skidmore Jones Building.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Rock fans can bag a chilli piper

A SCOTTISH band who prove that even the bagpipes can rock are coming to a venue in the Black Country. The Red Hot Chili Pipers – not to be confused with US rockers the Red Hot Chili Peppers – have a gig at Bilston's Robin 2 on Tuesday. The group that fuse rock classics with Scottish traditional music won TV talent show When Will I Be Famous and have played at festivals including T In The Park and the BBC Proms in Hyde Park. Tickets cost £22 on the door (£20 advance). Call 01902 401211.

Yoga sessions to mark laughter day

FREE laughter yoga sessions will be on offer in Stourbridge to mark World Laughter Day. Maggie Thompson will be running two classes at Mary Stevens Park at noon and 2.30pm on Sunday, May 1. Laughter yoga is said to have wellbeing benefits and the whole experience described as being 'most uplifting'. A monthly laughter yoga club is held at Wordsley Community Centre with the next session at 7pm on May 23. For more information call Maggie Thompson on 07565 218567 or email maggie1951@googlemail.com

Diamond Head to sparkle again

HEAVY metal group Diamond Head, who formed in Stourbridge 30 years ago, will be playing a Black Country show in the summer. The band appears at the Robin 2 in Mount Pleasant, Bilston, on August 18, with tickets £12.50 in advance and £14.50 on the door. Diamond Head were part of the new wave of British heavy metal in the 1980s and were big influences on major metal bands such as Metallica and Megadeth.

Music and poetry from Black Country talent

BROADCASTER and performer Billy Spakemon will present an evening of Black Country entertainment in Wolverhampton this month. The evening of poetry, music and storytelling is on April 30 from 7.30pm at the Arena Theatre, Wulfruna Street. Kim Lowings and the Greenwood, The Langford Band and The Boonies (Billy Spakemon and Bren Hawthorne) are among those to feature. Tickets are £10 and £8 concessions. Visit www.wlv.ticketsolve.com

Pub is changing hands

A STOURBRIDGE town centre pub is changing hands. The JD Wetherspoon chain is selling the Edward Rutland in High Street to Amber Taverns. It is one of three pubs that Wetherspoon has sold to Amber Taverns. The staff are being kept on by the new owners, who take over next month.

Bosses are 'confident' over birth services

HEALTH bosses say they are 'confident' their maternity services could take dozens of extra mums-to-be to ease pressure on Walsall's Manor Hospital. It was revealed last week that up to 200 expectant mothers a year are set to be told they cannot have their babies delivered at the Manor. Instead, they will be redirected to services in Sandwell and Dudley. Elaine Newell, director of midwifery for Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust, said: "We have been talking to Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust for some time and are pleased to be able to support the Trust in offering access to our maternity service for women from the Walsall area, or parts of Sandwell who historically look to the Manor."

Capacity

"We are very confident that we have the right capacity to continue to provide our high standards of care in our midwifery services and birthing facilities." It has not yet been confirmed how expectant mothers will be divided between Sandwell's Midwifery Unit or Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital. Paul Clark, chief executive for Dudley Group NHS Foundation Group, said: "We can confirm the Trust has been in discussion with Walsall CCG and Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust regarding maternity provision. These discussions are still in the early stages."

Mayor planning big musical finale

THE Mayor of Dudley is planning a grand finale to his civic year. Councillor Steve Waltho is hosting the night of comedy and music at The Venue on Saturday, May 7, to raise money for his chosen charities. It will include laughs from comedy troupe the Fizzogs as well as music from The Empty Can, the band behind the official Black Country anthem.

Mayoress, Jayne Waltho, will also be putting her husband and guests through their paces in a special 'Mayor Does Strictly' dance event. Singers Chris Passey and Richie Ray will also be performing.

Tickets cost £25 at www.ticketsource.co.uk/mayorofdudleycharities or by calling 0333 666 3366.

Driver injured as lorry hits bridge

A MAN had to be taken to hospital after the lorry he was driving crashed into a bridge in Colesey. He was treated for neck and chest injuries at Darkhouse Lane on Thursday morning before being taken to Russells Hall.

Microchips solve stray dog problem

THE number of stray dogs found roaming the streets by Dudley Council has fallen over the last three years. New figures show the number of lost and abandoned dogs in 2015/16 was 268. That is down from 337 in 2014/15 and 522 in 2013/14. The statistics come as new micro-chipping laws have come into force for pet owners in England, Scotland and Wales. Figures for the calendar year 2015 show 42 dogs found by the council were put down. Council bosses hope the new micro-chipping laws that have come into effect will more dogs be reunited with their owners in future. Nick Powell, Dudley's head of environmental

health and trading standards, said: "We are glad to see this significant decrease in the number of stray dogs in the borough. As a council we have always encouraged responsible dog ownership and for owners to identify their dog with a suitable tag as well as having their pet micro-chipped to increase the likelihood of dogs being returned to their owners." **Reunited** Karen Jackson, acting chief officer for health and well-being, said: "Micro-chipping makes it far easier for the council's stray dog service to achieve the best outcome and reunite owners with their lost dogs. As of today it will become compulsory for all dogs over the age of eight weeks to be fitted with a microchip.

Victim left scared after burglar strikes twice

A BURGLAR who targeted the same house in the space of eight days has been jailed for three years.

Stuart White, aged 21, denied burglary and attempted burglary but was found guilty of both charges after a trial at Wolverhampton Crown Court. The first burglary took place on June 27 last year when White, of Brice Road, Pensnett, got away with a TV, speaker system and other items, while the attempted burglary saw him break a window. The court heard how the raids had been a traumatic experience for the woman who lives at the house targeted twice by White. Prosecutor Allan Mainds told Wolverhampton Crown Court: "She returned from work to find the window was smashed. She walked into her lounge and just broke down crying. He had taken a surround sound speaker system, a television and other items. "She said she feels scared in her own home now. This has been a very traumatic experience for the victim. Naomi Nelson-Cofie, barrister for White, said: "His mother and father are in court supporting him today. He is now living with his father, who has cancer. His father has explained that he needs his son to help care for his mother. "He knows his actions on that day were wrong, even though he denies the offence. In the conversations we've had he has shown that he is regretful that the woman has felt distress."

Ridiculous

But Judge Timothy Raggatt branded White's defence claim that he smashed the window by accident as 'ridiculous'. Judge Raggatt said: "Your conversations in private have no relevance if he doesn't show any remorse to the probation service or to the court. He's still claiming he didn't do it even after a trial in which his ridiculous defence that he broke the window by accident was rejected." Jailing White for three years, Judge Raggatt told him: "You maintained you were not guilty of these offences. You targeted the premises and you systematically searched them. "This was a nasty burglary. There was a very significant searching of the premises and your actions left the victim in a considerable state of distress."

Wings of love destined for church



Black Country artist Luke Perry works on the angel wings for the memorial bench at St Peter's Church

VISITORS to a church in the Black Country will be brought a little closer to heaven when a new sculpture depicting angel wings is erected. Artist Luke Perry was commissioned by St Peter's Church, Cradley, to craft the metal sculpture at his Cradley Heath workshop. The art work will feature two seats and will be unveiled during a ceremony at the church next month.

Mr Perry said: "It is quite a dramatic new sculpture and will be uplifting. It is also a memorial piece and will feature next to the church's cenotaph. I made it to look like real wings. Some angel wings you see don't look realistic – but these do. "The organisers at the church are doing a lot of work rejuvenating the area. There is a lot of planting going on at the memorial gardens. As part of that, they got

in touch with me about the sculpture." The £2,500 sculpture has taken Luke a month to craft. The steel was sourced from Netherton and the sculpture itself was made in Cradley Heath. St Peter's vicar Rev Katryn Leclizio, said: "We wanted a sculpture that reflected the historic industry of the area. We are hoping it will also be a focal point for wedding photos too."

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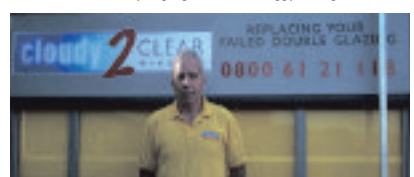
Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services. Managing Director Brian Stanley feels that it's all about service. "Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people

money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done. We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole." Cloudy2Clear service Wolverhampton and the surrounding

area and Brian is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. "The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people

I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated." So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Brian a call for a free quotation on 0800 61 21 118 and he'll be happy to help!



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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



'Kerb' your enthusiasm to park on pavement

YOU might think with the EU referendum and all the other rows going on at the moment, that the Government had got its hands pretty full and didn't really need to involve itself with any other distractions.

But no, give anybody in authority the chance to meddle, and they will take it with both hands. The latest wheeze is to ban us from parking on the kerb, to 'de-clutter' our roads and encourage more people to walk. Yep, that's just what the country is crying out for, isn't it?

I always thought decluttering was what Carol Smillie did on those awful decorating shows in the 1990s. But it seems the powers-that-be are offended by the sight of our cars being parked on the pavement. Presumably they hope issuing a few tickets will see us all happily get rid of them and cheerfully march to work singing The Internationale.

The ban on kerb parking is to bring us into line with London, where it has been prohibited for the past 40 years. But of course, getting around the capital is easy, because they have an underground railway. Does anybody in Westminster realise we don't actually have that luxury? Here's a better way to declutter our roads. Build wider ones with more parking.

□ □ □

THERE has been much consternation about the fact that Wolves' new sponsor next season will be payday loans company Money Shop. Perhaps, while they're about it, it might be time to change the motto on the badge. Out of darkness cometh debt, anyone?

□ □ □

STILL, the murmurings surrounding Wolves are nothing compared to the discontent around my club, Aston Villa.

Former winger Steve Froggatt contrasted the highly-paid players who have failed so dismally this season with the plight of the modestly-paid stadium staff who now face losing their jobs because of the team's slide into what I still call the Second Division.

Froggie suggested that the superannuated players could redeem themselves by donating a share of their salaries to save the jobs of the club staff.

To me this sounded an eminently sensible suggestion, but I can't see it happening given that £9m midfielder Idrissa Geyse is already demanding a transfer, saying that relegation wasn't part of the agreement, while the terminally mediocre Leandro Bacuna thinks he should be playing in the Champions League rather than the Championship.

Still, captain Joleon Lescott says seeing the humiliation confirmed was a weight off his shoulders. So every cloud has a silver lining. Dozens of ordinary working people face losing their jobs, the club will suffer the indignity of playing at a level they last endured in 1988. But still, Joleon now feels able to relax.



Terror victims, Patrick Evans, Joel Richards and Adrian Evans



The logo for the charity Smile for Joel, to help victims' families



Owen, who lost his brother in the attack, with the wristbands

We want their names to never be forgotten

An inspirational mother and son have set up a charity to help families hit by atrocities. **DAVID COSGROVE reports**

'I WANT their names and beautiful caring ways to live on forever through their legacy.'

These were the words of a Black Country mother whose son, brother and father were killed in the Tunisia terror attack, as she launched an appeal to support other victims of mass atrocities.

Suzi Richards and her surviving son Owen, aged 16, have created 'Smile for Joel' to support others who have lost family members in a similarly harrowing manner to themselves.

The fundraising charity - which has been backed by David Cameron - will work with Victim Support to help families who have become victims of traumatic bereavement, particularly through homicide.

Ms Richards said it will help keep the memories of her son Joel, brother Adrian and father Patrick alive, who were killed by Islamic State terrorist Seifeddine Rezgui in June.

Previous

Aspiring football referee Joel, 19, was tipped for the top and was extremely close with his uncle and grandfather.

The triple loss tore Ms Richards' family apart, but she said the backing of Victim Support since the tragic incident has helped them move through the grieving process.

Ms Richards said: "I had never heard of [Victim Support] before but they turned up about five days after it happened and the support they gave Owen initially was fantastic.

"Since then the support for the family has been brilliant as well - and they are still supporting us now.

"In the darkest days they actually became part of the family - they were with us through everything and helped with everything, right down to arranging counselling.

"What they do is fantastic.



David Cameron, who backed the wristbands scheme, seen with Suzy and Owen Richards

"We decided to call it Smile for Joel because Joel was the youngest victim and I want to keep all their names alive.

"I want to make a difference for others for them.

"They were three of the nicest, most caring guys you could ever meet and would do anything for anybody.

"I want their names to be part of helping others.

"They were just three everyday guys who went on holiday who were sat there one minute and then they were murdered the next."

Dozens of Joel's friends have taken photographs with Smile for Joel wristbands at different locations across the globe.

Ms Richards penned an emotive mission statement on Smile for Joel's Facebook page.

It says: "After losing three very precious family members last year in the Tunisian ter-

ror attacks my loving family will never be the same. We are shattered, broken and every day is a colossal struggle for not having them here with us.

"To go from a family of six to three for just going on holiday, is an unbearable pain and has left an emptiness that we know will never go away. In the midst of this heartache I am determined to stand strong for my remaining family.

"Like any mom would, I want to strive to make Owen's life the best I can, especially after being the sole survivor in my family on that fateful day.

"I am also determined to not let the lives of my son Joel, my dad Pat and my brother Ade be forgotten. I want their names and beautiful caring ways to live on forever.

"I want to make a difference to others for them.

"I want to make a difference in their name for others who have experienced losing someone they love in such a heartbreaking traumatic way.

"Therefore, Smile for Joel in its own right will become a fundraising charity to support Victim Support and help shattered/ broken families who become victims of a traumatic bereavement through homicide including terrorism.

"Not every family has the love and support we have had and continue to have from our family, friends and our community and I thank you all immensely for that.

"So together, with your help, my plan is to continue to make smiles for Joel."

The money will be distributed through Victim Support.

Ms Richards has encouraged people to come forward with fundraising schemes.

A batch of Smile for Joel wristbands has been made and people have been encouraged to take photos of these at different locations around the world.

Astonished

Wednesbury North ward Councillor Elaine Costigan said the family's strength was 'inspirational' and Smile for Joel was a perfect way to keep memories alive.

She said: "I'm just astonished at how strong she is.

"I think this is really helping to keep Suzy going and I know how much she wants to keep their names alive.

"It's special - I think both Suzy and Owen are inspirational.

"They're so strong together, it's amazing. I don't know where they find the strength from but somehow they manage it.

"We all support whatever they want to do."

The families of those killed in the Tunisia terror attacks attended a memorial service at Westminster Abbey along with Prince Harry and Prime Minister David Cameron.

At an event after the service, Owen managed to chat to Mr Cameron about the cause, and the PM was photographed with the teen and Ms Richards wearing one of the wristbands created for the cause.

Anyone who wants to raise cash for the charity is asked to email smileforjoel@aol.com.

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Korean war graves photo appeal

I AM acting on behalf of the authorities at the United Nations Memorial Cemetery Busan, South Korea, where more than 800 British Servicemen are buried.

The authorities wish to obtain photographs of those servicemen interred there and of those who died but have no known grave. The photographs will be displayed on the walls of the Cemetery Hall of Remembrance. The following are just a few of the young men from the West Midlands who gave their lives in Korea: Pte Percy J Smallshaw, Gnr Vernon F Bayley, Cfn Stan-

ley J Amphlett, Cpl Ronald G Davies, Spr Ronald Harvey, Mne William L J Jauncey, Maj Peter B Stephenson, Pte Frederick Gill, Fus Francis H Roberts, Cpl Norman Fene-mer, RE/A Kenneth P Jordan, Fus Derek E Tambllyn, Cpl David N Fellows, Rfn Kenneth Fletcher, Cpl Ronald B Babb.

Those who lost a loved one in the Korean War 1950-53 can send the photograph to me: Brian Hough, 116 Fields Farm Rd, Hyde, Cheshire SK14 3NP; 0161 368 5622 or 07467037742, bough116@gmail.com

BRIAN HOUGH

No need for bypass congestion

RECENTLY the congestion on the Dudley bypass has been terrible, all due to grass cutting on the islands.

Lanes were coned off, obviously for safety reasons, but why when work was finished were the cones not immediately removed. Delays could have been minimised.

The congestion was horrendous, all the way back to Burnt Tree and also back to Russells Hall Hospital. This was also very dangerous for emergency vehicles.

While stationary, it was unavoidable to not notice all the rubbish along the bypass. As Dudley Council keep saying they are looking to attract businesses to locate in the area, but I'm afraid what I saw gives a very negative impression.

Why not use artificial grass on the islands (no maintenance), do the work at night, and clear the rubbish regularly.

When work starts on the improvements for Pensnett, I hope traffic management is vastly improved.

P WINCHURCH
Dudley

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
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Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL
dudley.chrons@
expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

So, would you be a Yo Yo or a Yam Yam?

WE recently had a bosta of a night at Cradley Library to launch the second phase of the Where's Our Spake Project.

It is a project I have been involved with since the outset through Aston University and Rights and Equality Oldbury. The centre piece of the night was a film (second in the series) made by Geoff Broadway. It used extracts from oral interviews with Cradley people.

While watching the film one of the participants was asked about the term 'Yam Yam' and made a great comment that he had no idea where it came from. As far as he was concerned we here in the Black Country are Yo Yo's and you would more likely hear Yam over the

border in Brummagem. I myself have always thought the Yam label seemed a little misplaced as I don't hear it very much when either performing across the region or carrying out interviews, such as the ones in the project above.

It's a fascinating project which touches down next in Oldbury and the Langley Lodge on the evening of April 29, so if anyone is interesting in seeing what Geoff has made of the data collected from my home town please come along. Meanwhile 'Bin yo' a Yam or a Yo'. Any information of talks, events just email b.dakin@aston.ac.uk

DR BRIAN DAKIN
(BILLY SPAKE MON)
Tividale

Leaflet is propaganda

DAVID Cameron's arrogance is breathtaking that he makes no apology for the £9.3 million of taxpayers' money spent on the so-called factual leaflet (read: propaganda) to remain in the EU.

That the decision to produce the leaflet was made by a meeting of his remain-in-the-EU ministers, that excludes the Brexit ministers, shows once again that he is adopting a classic EU attitude.

He claims that Britain is in the driving seat influencing EU decisions and time and time again British leadership at the top table gets things done.

The record shows that Britain has opposed 72 EU measures when all 72 were overruled and became law in the UK.

I have returned my leaflet to 10 Downing Street.

PHIL SCHLANKER
Stourbridge

Hippodrome – keep deadline

THERE were deadlines regarding the land recovery from the Muslim Association and there was much taxpayers' money wasted on legal proceedings to finally reclaim the land.

Now we have the Hippodrome issue. People trying to save this monstrosity were given a deadline to submit final plans and I read in last week's Chronicle that there are still talks going on – why? This issue needs closure and soon to save more money being wasted. The council needs to be clear on this issue for a change.

J ABBISS
Dudley



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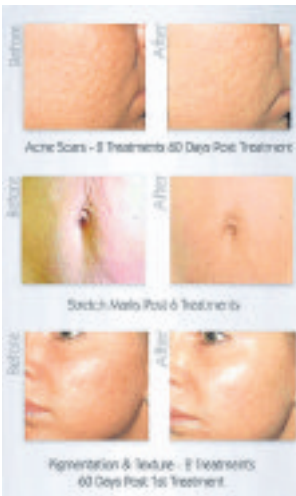
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Cyclist Andy Tennant at Staffordshire Cycle Festival



Wolverhampton Wheelers training on their 125th Anniversary



Club members taking part in a fancy dress parade in 1893



Club president Robin Kyte

Wheels just keep on turning as club members never tire

THEY first saddled up in a pub in 1891 and they are still going strong 125 years later.

The Wolverhampton Wheelers Cycling Club has almost 500 members aged five to 90 – and is healthier today than at any stage in its illustrious history.

Robin Kyte, its president and a member for 50 years after joining aged 11, said: "When I was young you were regarded as being a bit weird if you were interested in cycling."

"But, since the Beijing and London Olympics and the British success in the Tour de France, the interest in cycling has exploded. Sales of bikes have gone through the roof."

British cycling star Andy Tennant – who won silver and bronze medals in last month's World Indoor Championships and rides for the team of Tour de France winner Bradley Wiggins – led the anniversary

MEMORY LANE

By John Scott

sary plaudits for the club he joined at the age of 14. The 29-year-old, from Wolverhampton, said: "I would not be where I am today without the Wheelers. I owe them a great deal."

"My mate and I went to an exhibition illustrating the sports on offer at the Aldersley Leisure Village and took part in a mock mountain bike race. I finished last – which was a common occurrence at the start of my cycling career. But I enjoyed it and joined the Wheelers."

"It was the enthusiasm of Robin Kyte and others that got me hooked on the sport. It is a fantastic club with great facilities. There are very few cycling clubs that have access to a velodrome and they make the most of it. I was rubbish at the beginning. I was a fat lad who enjoyed his biscuits. But I am the only member of the club ever to have won the Best

Trier award three years in a row."

By 2005 he was good enough to be selected for the British cycling development programme and has never looked back.

Sam Anslow is among the scores of schoolchildren who dream of following in the star's tyre tracks.

Inspiration

The 13-year-old from Gornal – a pupil at Ellowes Hall Sports College – joined the Wheelers three years ago and said: "I know of Andy Tennant and he is a real inspiration."

At the other end of the age scale is its oldest active member, Ron Aspey, who joined the Wheelers 68 years ago. He is now 90, still rides 10 miles every Thursday with other veterans from the club and has no plans to stop any time soon.

The Wheelers – a diminution of the cycling term 'wheelmen' – held its first meeting in Wolverhampton's Talbot Hotel in March 1891 and restricted membership to 30 people.

The inaugural official ride came two months later and took the cyclists to Boscobel House in Bishops Wood. The anniversary will be celebrated with a 'family ride' for current members on Sunday, May 15.

The club held a one-mile penny-farthing race around a flat cinder track in the Molineux grounds until the 1900s – long before it became the home ground of Wolves. But they were soon overtaken in the popularity stakes by the safety bike – sporting two wheels of equal size and a chain drive to the rear wheel.

The club survived as a group of friends during the First World War but re-affiliated to the National Cyclist Union in 1924 before expanding the membership further when women were allowed to join 12 years later.

Competition was restricted to individual time trials ridden against the clock. But former Wolverhampton Wheeler Percy



Attire and bike in the early 1900s

Stallard broke the mould when he organised the first massed race in this country – from Llangollen to Wolverhampton, in June 1942.

He was one of several big names to have belonged to the Wheelers. Other big-name former members include the late Bob Thom, a successful international rider and England team manager, and Hugh Porter, who won four individual pursuit world titles and a Commonwealth Games gold medal.

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Thugs attacked father in shopping centre car park

A FATHER was dragged from his car and viciously beaten by thugs in front of his two children at Merry Hill shopping centre on a Sunday afternoon.

CCTV footage, released in a bid to catch the attackers, shows the 41-year-old man attempting to park his car when the trio walk out in front of him, causing him to break suddenly.

They were involved in a short verbal exchange and then two of the men pulled the father from his car before punching and kicking his head and body several times – all in full view of the man's two children, who have been left traumatised by what happened.

The thugs fled the scene in a white Mercedes, after the attack at around 1.40pm on April 3.

The man required treatment for minor injuries.

Appalling

Councillor Rachel Harris described the attack as 'appalling and unacceptable' and stressed the incident should be prioritised to catch the thugs.

She said: "To hear of such a violent attack is despicable, I really hope it is an isolated incident."

"People go to Merry Hill to socialise and shop in a secure and safe environment, not to be viciously beaten up by thugs who think they are above the law. I hope police catch the culprits as quick as they can and they should be named and shamed to stop them doing anything like this again."

"I've never heard of an incident like this before at Merry Hill and I hope I don't hear of any incident of this nature again."

Anyone with information should contact Detective Sergeant Leighton Shingles at Smethwick police station on 101, or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.



Two of the men being sought by police



One of the men on CCTV

Addict is jailed for dealing

AN ADDICT trying to pay off a drug debt to his dealer was caught with heroin and cocaine, a judge heard.

Mark While was caught when police officers surrounded his stationary Fiat Punto in Tiled House Lane, Pensnett, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

Miss Saleem Mahmood, prosecuting, explained that an officer smashed the driver's window with a baton after While locked the doors and grabbed the steering wheel as if to drive off.

Searches of the car and an address linked to the defendant unearthed a total of £1,930 worth of heroin and cocaine wrapped up into 193 street deals.

While, 40, admitted possession of both heroin and cocaine with intent to supply and was jailed for 16 months by Judge Kristina Montgomery QC.

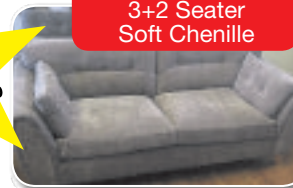
He had claimed he had been dealing for pay off a debt of nearly £5,000 to a violent drug dealer.

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Museum forges ahead with heritage project



Guides Carol Davis and Tracey Forrest at the museum's Anchor Forge, where the steam hammer will operate

ALMOST £100,000 has been raised for an important piece of industrial history to be restored at the Black Country Living Museum in Dudley.

An appeal was launched for donations to fund the cost of repairs to the Black Country's last working steam hammer. Now museum staff are delighted to announce success in the campaign to get the £99,000 needed to carry out work to get the Anchor Forge steam hammer back up and running again for the first time in 25 years.

Based in the Tipton Road museum's

Cradley Forge, the steam hammer is described as one of the most important inventions of the Industrial Revolution. It enabled workers to harness the power of steam for forging iron and steel.

The hammer on display at the museum came from the Isiah Preston's ironworks in Cradley Heath, which closed in 1979.

Heat

When working, the heat from the furnace raises steam in the boiler to power the hammer which bashes the iron into the shape required.

Work is now underway to disman-

tle brickwork surrounding the large boiler to enable its condition to be assessed.

The museum's deputy chief executive of development Carolyn Sankey the museum was delighted to begin restoration work.

She said: "We are thrilled that we have been able to raise all the funds needed so that this important restoration work can take place and our Anchor Forge steam hammer can operate again, for the first time in 25 years."

Some of the funding has come from Arts Council England, the Idlewild Trust and The Saintbury Trust.

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Public can enter into annual show

Wall Heath Horticultural

THE speaker on Tuesday, April 5, was Malcolm Dickson. He began to grow and show herbs for a hobby in 1992, visiting shows and exhibiting in a minor form and then becoming more entrenched into the hobby, he decided to use his four acres of land more usefully by growing herbs commercially.

Malcolm is very well known, creating gardens of herbs at The Chelsea Show, Harrogate and Malvern Show to name but a few.

He gave a splendid talk and showed films to members, which went very well. This was followed by questions from members. A vote of thanks was given by Tony Smith.

The guild holds meetings on the first Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm at The Community Centre in Enville Road Wall Heath.

On May 3 there will be a cookery demonstration by Bridget Bradley followed by a fish and chip supper. On June 7, a talk will be given by Howard Drury about Dublin and County Wicklow Gardens.

Any member of the public wishing to enter The Annual Wall Heath Show on Saturday September 10 at 2.15pm is welcome to do so. A programme will be available soon from chairman Amanda Ridney 01384 287480.

New members are always welcome to visit at any guild evening where refreshments are always served.

Otherwise becoming a member of this organisation costs just a very small fee.

Toast raised to Her Majesty's birthday

Bessie Waters, who won the top table flowers in the raffle, and Sylvia Cope Dudley South Ladies Luncheon Club

CHAIRMAN Mary Jones was pleased to welcome 41 members and one visitor to a special luncheon to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday. The tables were attractively decorated in red, white and blue as well as items on the bring and buy stall.

Preceding the excellent three-course lunch, president 92-year-old Brenda Adkin invited members to toast the Queen's health with a complimentary glass of wine and members also decided to send a specially hand-crafted card on her birthday.

The speaker was Adrian Barrett who brought slides and a video to illustrate his talk on 'Life & Death in Dudley Limestone Mines'. Some 400 million years ago Dud-

ley lay beneath a warm shallow sea, right across to Shropshire. Limestone was used to build Dudley Castle, the Priory and for smelting iron from 1740 to 1924. He showed pictures of caves, canal tunnels and the cavern under Dudley Zoo, which was built as a bomb-store. Dudley Guest Hospital was built by the Earl of Dudley to deal with miners blinded in the mines.

The next luncheon will be on Friday, May 13 when the speakers will be Jessie and Jo Powell with jewellery and collectables.

Choir provides entertainment

Kingswinford Ladies Social Circle

Kingswinford Ladies Social Circle

recent stay in hospital and during her sister Audrey's illness and death.

Entertainment came from local choir Singing For Pleasure. Their first two items were dedicated to beloved ex-chairman and treasurer Audrey Phipps

who passed away in February. The musical items were many and varied, with duets and solos, compered by Ken West who added humour to the proceedings. Ena Baker gave the vote of thanks.

There were two raffle prize winners.

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Heritage Lottery bids to help restore landmarks

BIDS for funding which would allow two historic landmarks in the Dudley borough to undergo long-awaited refurbishments are to be submitted.

Campaigners are desperate to upgrade the famous tower on Sedgley Beacon as well as the building known as the White House at the Stevens Park in Quarry Bank.

Protectors of the landmarks have long been trying to secure cash to allow them to undergo much-needed improvements.

The Friends of Sedgley Beacon have managed to secure some funding from the Wildlife Trust and are now hoping they will be able to top it off with Heritage Lottery cash.

As well as improvements to the tower itself, which has stood on the Beacon since the mid-19th century, the group is also keen to improve the land around it. The site has attracted vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

The total cost of the project is believed to be around £150,000.

Repairs

Meanwhile, the White House is judged to be 'very run-down' and in a 'bad state of repair'.

Plans to refurbish the building, which is at the entrance of Stevens Park, and would also see it become a community centre and cafe, were revealed two years ago and received the backing of the public.

The Wildlife Trust has also agreed to fund the project, along with South Staffs Water, but more cash is needed if the scheme is to be brought to fruition.

Treasurer of Friends of Sedgley Beacon Tony Cowell said the group had been striving to bring about improve-



The sandstone tower on Sedgley Beacon is popularly known as The Big Whistle. It was constructed in 1846 and is 50ft high and 7ft in diameter.

Known as The Big Whistle, it is popularly believed to have been built by Staffordshire stargazer Lord Wrottesley.

Campaigners said they were hopeful the landmarks would be considered to be of sufficient historical importance, so worthy of devoting funds to.

The organisation has also supported projects at Mary Stevens Park in Stourbridge, which is being revamped.

The present tower, built of Gornal

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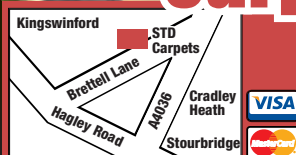
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Giant poppy for battle centenary's memorial

THE 100th anniversary of the Battles of Qatia and Oghartina, where several Dudley soldiers died in action, is being commemorated by a giant poppy in a Worcester park.

The soldiers from the Worcestershire Yeomanry were killed in action as British Empire forces defended the vital Suez Canal against German-led Ottoman Empire forces during the First World War.

The Battle of Qatia was fought on April 23, 1916, and that day saw four Dudley men die in battle – Frank Baker, of Brettell Street; Wilfred Ernest Harper, of Hall Street; Norman Horace Parsons, of Barnett Street; and Joseph Paynter of Steppingstone Street. All four are buried in Jerusalem.

Dr Adrian Gregson, Worcestershire World War One Hundred Project Manager said: “The Battle

of Qatia is a significant moment in Worcestershire’s military history and an important moment to remember the sacrifice of the Worcestershire Yeomanry.”

The event on Saturday at will feature a special service at Worcester Cathedral, an exhibition and the unveiling and dedication of a nine-foot tall poppy sculpture, which was designed and created by Victoria Harrison. It will stand in Cripplegate Park as a lasting memorial to the Worcestershire Yeomanry.

Qatia 100 is part of the Worcestershire World War One Hundred project. Funded by £353,200 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, it is one of the largest programmes of events across England commemorating the First World War.

See www.w1worcestershire.co.uk website for more details.



Designer Victoria Harrison with her nine-foot high poppy tribute to the Worcestershire Yeomanry

Busy YMCA had to turn teens away

VULNERABLE youngsters in the Black Country are being turned away by the YMCA due to a surge in applicants and a lack of volunteers.

The number of referrals at the YMCA Black Country Group's Open Door project has shot up in the last 12 months. But a lack of volunteers to host applicants means many are having to be turned away.

The YMCA offers two services – supported lodgings and a night-stop.

Supported Lodgings, which helps teenagers aged 16 to 18 find accommodation with local households, has received 213 referrals across the region in the last 12 months from the Open Door project, compared to just 134 the previous year.

Of these, 35 people have been turned away, including five in Dudley, six each in Sandwell and Walsall, and 16 in Wolverhampton.

Referrals for the emergency night-stop service have gone up from 209 to 248, and the YMCA has had to say no to 46 teenagers who need a place to stay for one night or two.

£4m drug gang boss locked up for 17 years

A CUSTOMER service worker from Rowley Regis has been jailed for 17 years after leading a £4 million drug smuggling ring.

Shafaqat Hussain admitted leading an operation that trafficked 40 kilos of heroin into the UK from Pakistan.

The 39-year-old led a gang of seven who smuggled large quantities of the Class A drug into the West Midlands.

The criminal enterprise was eventually smashed by an undercover police operation.

Hussain, of Perry Park Road, used his contacts in Pakistan to organise the operation, which saw heroin smuggled in through various different UK ports, with the drug hidden inside everyday items such as children's clothing.

Detectives became suspicious in August 2012 when accomplice Sakander Riaz was arrested in connection with another matter.

Information obtained in that inquiry sparked a huge covert policing operation that led to the interception of millions of pounds worth of heroin at Bordesley Green in Birmingham and at ports around the UK.

Officers from the Serious Organised Crime Unit and the National Crime Agency were led to the gang.

Import

Working alongside Hussain were floor layer Sakander Riaz, 34, of Belchers Lane, Bordesley Green; unemployed Jason Tremayne, 45, of Latelov Road, Kitts Green; unemployed Andrew Yaqub, 44, of Latelov Road, Kitts Green; brothers and shopkeepers Usman Farooq, 23, and Umar Farooq, 31, both of Latelov Road, Kitts Green; as well as unemployed Harji Varsani, 54 of no fixed address.

After admitting conspiring to import heroin, Hussain was jailed for 17 years with the rest of his gang also facing prison sentences.



Shafaqat Hussain

Riaz also pleaded guilty to conspiring to import heroin and was jailed for 13-and-a-half years, while Tremayne was found guilty of conspiring to import heroin and was sentenced to seven years prison.

Yaqub admitted allowing his premises to be used in connection with drug trafficking offences and was jailed for 18 months.

Varsani was sentenced to a five-year jail term after he was found guilty of conspiring to import heroin.

The Farooq brothers have both admitted conspiring to import heroin and will be sentenced in May.

Afterwards, Detective Chief Inspector Phil Cape said: “Their crimes spanned continents and our response required the deployment of sophisticated investigative techniques. As a result, drugs destined for the streets of the West Midlands and worth £4m have been taken out of circulation.”

Detectives will now set about recovering money illegally gained by the men.

Donny's celebration gig

MULTI-MILLION-SELLING 1970s pop idol Donny Osmond will be celebrating 50 years in show business with a concert at a Birmingham venue next year.

Tickets go on sale tomorrow (Friday) for the Pumpy Love star's 2017 tour, The Soundtrack Of My Life, named after his most recent and 60th album, including a gig at the Genting Arena on February 3.

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Pet Shop Boys' 13th is just Super

It's pure gold at the end of this rainbow

ALBUMS

by Leon Burakowski

NO pipes and slippers for the Pet Shop Boys who, with a career dating back to the 80s, show no inclination to get off the dancefloor.

The duo's 13th album, *Super*, is an exploding glitterball of euphoric dance-pop, Ibiza tanned and rooted in the best bits of synth pop, house and rave music.

Even at its most epic and anthemic, *Super* has a wry smile on its face thanks to Neil Tennant's downbeat vocal style and sometimes sardonic lyrics to complement the relentless beats from Chris Lowe and producer Stuart Price.

Highlights include the catchy The Pop Kids, the playful Yello-like Pazzol, the appropriately entitled Groovy and the majestic Inner Sanctum.

Add *Super* to the latest New Order and Underworld albums as further evidence that the major electronic pioneers of the 80s and 90s are not only still relevant but producing some of their best music.

Judging by its chart-topping status, *Everything You've Come To Expect*, the second album from *The Last Shadow Puppets* has established Alex Turner's 'other band' as big a deal as his day job outfit the Arctic Monkeys.

Everything does tend to live up to its title, being slick and clever, sophisticated yet shot through with Sheffield steel.

However, it smacks of excess, the lavish strings drown the songs, most of which seem to be based on classic rock 'n' roll with big nods to Motown and Morricone (Ennio, the movie music maestro). It works a treat on *Miracle Aligner*, and to some degree on *The Bourne Identity* and *Aviation*.



Pet Shop Boys Chris Lowe and Neil Tennant return with euphoric dance-pop

But too many of these songs seem eager to feature on a Tarantino soundtrack or to audition for a Bond theme, and on *The Dream Synopsis* it all starts to get frightfully post-modern and clever-clever.

Maybe next time they should return to record in Yorkshire rather than California because smug is never a good rock look.

Now a quartet, the London-based *Telesman* build on the promise of their debut *Breakfast* with highly likeable second album, *Brilliant Sanity*. Home-spun and stripped back, time spent with Bats For Lashes producer Dan Carey has paid off with an album that keeps the group's natural quirkiness in check whilst continuing their dogged pursuit of the perfect hook.

Often the songs are propelled by Hiro Amamiya's tight drums and Peter Cattermoul's bass, and Jonny Sanders fills out the sound with his bubbling synth while brother Tommy takes centre stage with his guitar and vocals, that sound akin to Syd Barrett.

Of the highlights, *Glory Hallelujah* is a stadium anthem on a par with a

James or Arcade Fire classic, whilst Dusseldorf shows their pop prowess and *Drop Out*, with its Fleetwood Mac like moody riff, hints at a darker side.

There is a strong whiff of patchouli about the *Black Mountain* album IV. The Canadian outfit's first offering in over five years will delight anyone hoping for a summer spent in a West Country field supping cider whilst listening to psychedelic rock.

Imagine a potent blend of Black Sabbath, Hawkwind, Jefferson Airplane and Siouxsie and the Banshees, that's what *Black Mountain* deliver, especially on *Florian Saucer Attack*, which could become their Silver Machine.

On the subject of *Hawkwind*, the alt-rock scene's intergalactic veterans are back with a concept album based on EM Forster's prophetic sci-fi story *The Machine Stops*, when in 1909 he foresaw people living in isolated subterranean cells communicating via a personal screen. Tracks like *The Machine* and *King of the World* prove they can still crank out a powerful riff, and Dave Brock has a melodic flair demonstrated by *Synchronised Blue*.



Anthony (Gary Wilmot) applies Judy's (Lisa Maxwell) make up before her performance

SO it's true, there really is gold at the end of the rainbow – in the shape of the brilliant actress and singer Lisa Maxwell.

Her portrayal of the troubled legend Judy Garland in *End of the Rainbow* really hit the spot. In a performance where she was on stage for probably 99 per cent of the show she never faltered, portraying the crazy and tragic life of the child star whose life was blighted by drink and drugs and a desperate desire to be loved.

Despite many husbands, she never really found anyone to love her for herself, except her gay pianist Anthony, the only one who promised to actually care for her.

It is now 47 years since she died, at the young age of 47, but Judy Garland still manages to hold people's interest, as much for her personal life as for her stage and screen career. And that was obvious by the number of

END OF THE RAINBOW GRAND THEATRE

people crammed into the Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton, and the standing ovation Lisa received at the end.

She laid bare Judy's life, how she battled her demons, her life as a child star that led her on a downward spiral and a lifetime battle with addiction.

Not an easy role to take on but Lisa Maxwell pulls it off well. It helps that the likeness is good and she can certainly sing. And no it was not all misery. There were lots of really funny parts. Funny, but also tragic.

The songs are there, *The Man that Got Away*, *Come Rain or Come Shine* and, of course, *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*. She was well matched with Gary Wilmot as Anthony her gay pianist. And her husband-to-be Mickey

Deans (Sam Attwater) who played her manager. He was keen to get her back on stage to clear her debts and even ended up feeding her pills in the end to get her to perform. It was obvious that his intention was more about making a name for himself as a manager.

The set switches between the Ritz Hotel Suite and The Talk Of The Town nightclub. At the end Gary Wilmot comes on stage to update the audience of how she did eventually marry Mickey but died just weeks later.

I was not sure what to expect with this production but I came away moved and with a better understanding of what drove this star over the edge.

The run at the Grand was unfortunately only brief but you can catch it at Lichfield Garrick Theatre in May and the New Alexandra Theatre in Birmingham in June.

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Theatre needs storage help

A THEATRE group in Dudley has appealed for help to find a permanent base for its equipment.

Dudley Little Theatre has been forced to use corners of garages and any available space since August 2015. But now chiefs are looking for a long-term solution.

A previous storage place was demolished and another was found to contain asbestos. The theatre group was then offered part of a large storage unit in Netherton but last year the unit was subdivided and so the equipment was moved temporarily to Netherton Arts Centre. Then that became the base for Dudley Education Department's Performing Arts, which needed its own storage on site. The theatre company, based at Netherton since 1947, has now run out of options. To help, contact theatre chairman Rebecca Cleo on 01902 566077 or 07954 424555.

Developer wants build 30 flats on site of courthouse

A FORMER court building in Halesowen is being replaced with a three-storey apartment block under plans.

The old magistrates court site at the junction of Queensway and Laurel Lane has been empty since the building closed five years ago and has been up for sale. Now Ruskin Properties has unveiled plans to flatten it and create a housing block in its place.

A total of 30 two-bedroom flats would be created with 42 parking spaces to be provided.

Developers have promised a 'stylish, modern development' to replace the 1970s court building, which was demolished. The plans have been lodged with Dudley Council with a decision expected to be made in the next few weeks.

A statement with the plans said: "The proposed development would make a positive contribution to local character and the distinctiveness of the area."

Character

"The proposals would result in a high quality residential development that would compliment and enhance the character and quality of the area within which it stands."

Halesowen Magistrates Court closed in 2011 with the loss of around 70 jobs after being among several court buildings across the Midlands which were axed as part of Government cuts.

Halesowen councillor Hilary Bills said she was pleased the site was finally going to be used again.

She explained: "Once the decision was made to close the court, housing was the only option left for that piece of land."

"We would have liked to have kept our court - and everything else we have lost in Halesowen - but it's an empty building and it isn't going to be used again."

Translators cost the police £7m

TRANSLATORS have been used by West Midlands Police for more than 150 different languages and dialects during the past five years, costing taxpayers £7.6 million.

Interpreters were needed to help prisoners in custody as well as providing support to victims and witnesses, a Freedom of Information request reveals. The five languages where a translator was most commonly used include Urdu, Punjabi, Polish, Romanian and Bengali. Translations have also been made for languages ranging from French, Spanish and German to African and Arabic dialects.

According to the figures, the bill for five years was £7,679,406. This breaks down to £1,425,897 in 2015, £1,465,328 in 2014 and £1,368,542 in 2013, £1,521,323 in 2012 and £1,898,316 in 2011.

Firefighter Stephen retires



Firefighter Stephen Weaver was congratulated by the team at Oldbury Fire Station

A FIREFIGHTER who has worked across the Black Country has retired after 30 years.

Stephen Weaver, aged 50, of Kings Norton, hung up his kit for the last time this month at Oldbury Fire Station, where he has worked for the last five years. He previously worked at Brierley Hill Fire Station for 24 years.

Father-of-three Stephen always planned to leave after completing his three decades of service but said he will 'have his hands full', running an under-eight football team and spending more time honing his decorating skills.

He counts the Smethwick 'Chinese lantern' fire in 2013 as one incident that sticks in his memory more than most.

More than 200 firefighters attended the blaze, with crews describing it as the largest

they had seen in the West Midlands. The fire, which was caused by a floating lantern that dropped from the sky onto piles of waste, produced a 6,000ft smoke plume that could be seen for up to 60 miles away. It was estimated to have caused £6m damage to the Jayplas depot.

Stephen said: "That fire is one that definitely stands out, as my crew was the first on the scene. It was incredible, I don't think I've ever seen anything like it."

He added: "I'm obviously sad to be leaving behind such a great bunch of lads at Oldbury. I can only describe it as a brotherhood. I've had a great career but always said I'd retire once my 30 years was up."

"I've got plenty of things to keep me occupied, whether it be the kids or having places to decorate. I'm sure the wife is intending to keep me busy."

Tenants' handbook can be downloaded

THE rights and responsibilities of Dudley tenants can be easily accessible thanks to an updated handbook available online.

Dudley Council's informative revised tenants' handbook is available to download now after its launch earlier this month. The guide contains information and guidance about tenancies, as well as on welfare reforms, rent, repairs and maintenance.

Tenants can also find out about how to become involved in the running of their estates, as well as other useful information.

Alan Lunt, Dudley Council's strategic director for housing, said: "The tenants' handbook is a good quality document which puts everything in one easy to find place."

The handbook is available to download from www.dudley.gov.uk/resident/housing/council-housing/tenants-handbook-website.

War hero is celebrated

A PLAQUE commemorating a First World War Victoria Cross hero was being unveiled in Stourbridge.

Oldswinford-born Second Lieutenant Edward Felix Baxter, of the King's Liverpool Regiment, received the honour for leading a raid on German trenches.

The ceremony, at Mary Stevens Park, was to mark a 100 years since the heroic deed which led to his death. TT motorbike racer and teacher Mr Baxter was born in 1885 in what is now the Crabmill pub.

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Grab your spade for an outdoor workout

As National Gardening Week focuses on how to Get Fit In The Garden, Hannah Stephenson talks to top garden designer Bunny Guinness about how to burn calories and stay healthy through horticulture

WHILE so many of us pound away in the gym in our efforts to keep fit, burn calories and lose a few pounds, remember there is a great outdoor arena in your garden which can help you do just that.

Someone weighing around nine stone will burn 150 calories in half an hour of digging, while non-motorised moving typically burns around 165 calories per 30 minutes, according to research from Harvard Medical School.

Raking the lawn for 30 minutes burns around 120 calories – the same as the calories burned in a half hour of Tai Chi, volleyball and even horseback riding – while half an hour of splitting wood burns the same amount of calories as half an hour of vigorous weight-lifting, research suggests.

Try squatting when you're weeding or planting and you'll use a mass of muscles in the process.

Stand on one leg while pruning, digging or clipping, which will stretch you and increase suppleness. Don't always get out the ladder. Instead, get on your toes on one leg if possible and stretch to reach.

Bunny Guinness, award-winning garden designer and co-author of the book Garden Your Way To Health And Fitness, will be supporting National Gardening Week this year.

She says: "The wonderful thing about gardening is that, unlike repetitive exercises at the gym, it can provide all over-body fitness – raking, weeding, digging and other gardening tasks all use different muscles and test your body in different ways."

Calories

Guinness, who was diagnosed with a slipped disc aged 11, but has worked on her core over the years with the help of foam rollers and back strengthening exercise, continues: "People don't realise how many calories exercise in the garden uses up.

"If I went to a gym and did a good workout – 20 minutes on a rowing machine, 20 minutes on a running machine and 20 minutes on a cross trainer – or spent three hours in the garden mowing the lawn, weeding and pruning, I'd use up the same amount of calories."

Warm-ups are important, especially if you've been a couch potato over the winter months, she stresses.

"It's best to limit your activity on one thing, so rotate your garden jobs – don't spend hours digging a border all at once – and, most importantly, stretch, which makes a huge difference to me. If I don't stretch at the end of the day when I'm warm, I really stiffen up afterwards."

People with a small garden who are going to find it hard to do enough aerobic exercise can use up energy doing step-ups on their existing steps or a wooden bench, she suggests.

Monkey bars

"You are not going to be carting wheelbarrows for miles, so it's good to mix it up with other things. You can do bench presses and other exercises on a simple garden bench. Some people have monkey bars for upper body exercise.

"If you are raking – which is like a lunge – try to use your other side. We tend to use just one side of our bodies, but you will get used to using the other side too."

Classic back problems associated with gardening can be avoided if you make your core muscles as strong as they can be, she says.

"When you are lifting a heavy pot, squat down and use your core muscles to lift it up, pulling it close to your tummy and then stand. You really don't want to be twisting and having the weight out from your body. Foam rollers are brilliant to help you realise where your core muscles are."

If you want to be super fit, combine gardening with a more traditional work-out and avoid shortcuts like ride-on lawnmowers, leaf-blowers and other tools which avoid having to pick things off the ground.

The four RHS Gardens will be leading the campaign, which runs until Sunday, with other gardens across the UK encouraged to take part.

For more information, visit www.nationalgardeningweek.org.uk



Magnolia tree blossom varies in size and colour depending on variety

Glorious blooms carry wonderful scents too

BEST OF THE BUNCH – Magnolia

THESE glorious flowering trees and shrubs whose blooms range from goblet-sized deep red purples to starry whites can be used effectively as stand-alone specimens and in borders, depending on the type you choose.

Magnolia liliiflora 'Nigra', for instance, is an ideal compact tree which could make a focal point in a small garden, bearing goblet-shaped deep red-pink flowers in late spring.

Magnolia stellata, the star magnolia, is the smallest spring-flowering type and one of the most popular, named for its white star-shaped blooms. M. x soulangeana produces tulip-shaped bluish white flowers, flushed purple-pink at the base.

The evergreen magnolia M. grandiflora grows to 3m x 1.8m, producing large creamy white lemon-scented flowers in summer. Magnolias prefer neutral to acid soil and the deciduous varieties love clay.

The deciduous types flower in spring, so frost can damage their blooms, and the smaller-flowered types are more weather resistant.

GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT – Sowing cucumbers under glass

ALTHOUGH you can buy cucumbers all year round, the feeling of achievement you get when you grow your own make it worth having a go and you only need a couple of plants to give you a constant supply in summer.

They're delicious in salads or added to sauces with fish or in salsas and other dips.

Cucumbers do take up a lot of room in the greenhouse, so bear that in mind when sowing. Sow singly in 8cm (3in) pots in a heated propagator in early spring for growing on in a heated greenhouse, or later in spring if your greenhouse is unheated.

Pot them on to larger pots to allow them to establish further before planting them in the soil borders of your greenhouse in June, in 30cm pots or two to a growing bag. Keep them out of draughts and water well especially when cropping, but don't allow the soil to become waterlogged. Bamboo canes will be needed to support them and you should remove sideshoots from the bottom 60cm of the plant, allowing higher ones to develop.

Playing a supporting role as garden grows

ROSS UNDERWOOD

Head Gardener at Hodnet Hall



IN LIKE a lion and out like a lamb is often the way I hear April described.

The days can be unexpectedly warm but it is still a month when we can expect cold nights and even frost so it is worth keeping an eye on the garden. It is also a great time to do some preparation so that the garden is as ready as it can be and you have time to enjoy it.

If you have had your sweet peas under glass then you should keep them there and keep pinching to stop them getting leggy but is a good idea to get your supports in place to save time later.

We grow hundreds of plants for cutting in the summer and it would be a waste of time to make wigwams from canes or hazel sticks so we use a large frame covered in pig netting through which the plants will scramble.

If you are putting them in the border try using twiggly material which looks more natural in the garden.

Cannas and dahlias will be sprouting which means that it is an excellent time to take cuttings from the latter.

Don't be too greedy and only take two or three from each tuber.

These can be rooted with a little rooting powder and put in pots of well drained cutting compost and covered by plastic or put in a frame where they can be kept turgid until they root.

In time they will form their own tubers.

Slugs

It is a good time to take basal cuttings from many plants.

Delphiniums can be short lived on my heavy soil or fall prey to slugs and snails so a few cuttings taken now will future proof you against catastrophe.

Another plant that will benefit from some timely support are herbaceous peonies.

We grow hybrids of P. lactiflora.

Their red spears are pushing up from the earth right now and in a short time the leaves will unfurl.

We grow peonies in two situations.

Firstly, in formal rows where there are primarily for cutting and secondly as border plants.

Where they are grown for cutting they are supported with a ring of garden canes around each plant.

These are then bound with gain string to stop the plant from flopping and so we can reach down and cut the stems as low as possible.

Where they are grown in the garden they are grown together in a border to themselves.

We put canes all around the bed and stretch green plastic garden netting over them.



Pieris in flower – the plants are at their best right now and April is the perfect time to be out and about



Sweet peas keeping warm until it's safe to plant them out

We use the type with large squares so the plants have plenty of room.

Whatever you do never ever put your cane through the crowns!

April is one of the best times to be out and about.

The soil is warming up and life is springing everywhere.

The low sunlight and long shadows accentuate structural elements within the garden and as the sun is not high or strong enough to bleach them, the colours of flowering trees and shrubs have a special vibrancy.

The sight of virginal white cherry blossoms

again a background of verdant green is one that I find especially uplifting.

One of my favourite is the single white flowered species cherry, Prunus sogdiana.

This extremely rare tree in cultivation comes from Central Asia and has abundant flowers followed by large fruit which ripens from yellow to red.

Beautiful

For those with an eye to see them members of the Acer family, including Acer rubrum, A. cappadocicum and A. pseudo-platanus (the Sycamore) are in flower now.



Supports for peonies as growth gets under way

These are beautiful when seen close up in red or lime green and I would encourage you to do so. There are many Pieris and Rhododendrons giving their best right now and the show will only get better and better.

Rhododendron praecox is always early, the suffix 'praecox' meaning 'the first'.

It's lilac purple flowers open along bare branches in the sunshine and do not get spoilt by frost.

There is plenty to do now but also plenty to enjoy so never mind those April showers.

Steve arrows in to take top Euro title

A PARTIALLY-SIGHTED archer has once again proved he's a shooting star by firing his way to the European Championship title.

Steve Prowse, who is a member of Wolverhampton Company of Archers, sealed his second European triumph at Saint-Jean de Monts, France, last week. He beat his biggest rival Christophe Gerardin in the final on his home turf.

Howling winds made it a difficult day for the V123 category arrowmen but Prowse, who already has the World indoor and outdoor titles to his name after victory in Germany last year, emerged with the gold after beating both Gerardin and the elements.

The 57-year-old from Wordsley said: "The weather conditions were horrendous, there were 40km per hour winds – so it was pretty difficult to shoot straight."

"I beat Christophe in the final. We actually get on really well. I came up against him in the indoor championships and beat him for the gold. The two of us are the best in the world in our category at the moment."

He has been mixing with the best for many years now, having previously won the European competition in 2003 and World outdoor in 2007.

Blindness and archery may sound like a recipe for disaster, but it is not. To fire arrows, Steve uses tactile sighting aid devices. The "back of the hand" aid is a device that is supported adjacent to the back of the archer's hand that is holding the bow. This provides the archer with a reference point for elevation. Foot locators guide stance and the left/right direction towards the target.

Steve, who has been an archer for around 20 years, said: "It's like the equivalent of a sighted archer looking down a sight."

After being registered blind in 1990, he took up the sport and was quickly spotted by a British Blind-sports talent scout.

He has since travelled to Korea, the Czech Republic, France and Germany in his quest to reach the top and practises eight hours a day for five days a week.

Steve added: "The next big one for me is the Beijing World Championships but I've got to qualify for it first."

On the way he is seeking sponsorship. To help him out, get in touch with Wolverhampton Company of Archers by emailing secretary@wcfoa.org.uk



Partially sighted archer Steve Prowse, of Wordsley, has won the European championships in France

Where there's a Will there's a way for Shakespeare fans

THE BBC is marking the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare's death with a live programme from the Royal Shakespeare Company's various sites in Stratford over this weekend.

April 23 is not only the Bard's birthday but also marks 400 years since his death.

Hosted by David Tennant and Catherine Tate, those involved in Shakespeare Live will include Dames Judi Dench and Helen Mirren, Benedict Cumberbatch, Sirs Ian McKellan and Antony Sher, Meera Syal, members of the Birmingham Royal Ballet and singers including Gregory Porter and Alison Moyet. The show will be broadcast live from 8.30pm on BBC Two.

Amateur performers are also celebrating the Bard's anniversary with a variety of different tributes.

On Saturday singers from Elmfield School in Stourbridge, Old Swinford Hospital School and Summerhill Choral Society from Kingswinford will perform a Youth Showcase Concert at St James's Church in Wollaston.

The choirs will perform several arrangements of Shakespeare's songs which he wrote for inclusion in his plays, and the event is organised by Local and Live, a non-profit-making group based in Stourbridge, assisted by Irish composer Shaun Davey.

Spokesman Graham Smith said: "The concert will be a wonderful tribute to the world's greatest playwright, born in nearby Stratford-Upon-Avon, and will be an entertaining evening for anyone who enjoys good choral singing." For tickets, £9, contact (01384) 377162. Under-18s get free admission.

Brewer is toasting deal with Finland

CRAFT beer from the Black Country will soon be served in bars in Finland after award-winning Stourbridge brewery Sadler's Ales won its first major exporting deal.

The Lye brewer will be shipping thousands of bottles of its Hop Bomb and Red Ale IPA to the Scandinavian country over the next 12 months as it looks to ramp up its overseas business, following a UK Trade & Investment trip to Latvia in November last year.

Ian King, sales director, said the three-day export insight visit had been an exciting catalyst for new business opportunities and markets.

As well as exporting to Finland, the brewery is also in advanced talks with distributors in Norway and Sweden, after the opportunities were spotted by Paul Keeling, the company's UKTI international trade adviser.

"It's an exciting time for the brewery and we are very pleased to be in the process of sending our first major consignment of beers to Finland, which will be sold in retail stores and bars across the country," said Mr King.

Quality

"It's the culmination of a lot of hard work by the team here but we are confident about the quality of our beers and are determined to get our brand known in as many territories as possible."

He urged businesses from the West Midlands who were thinking of exporting for the first time to seize any such opportunity.

"We've been looking at the possibilities of exporting for a while and the trip to Latvia last year put us on a firm footing. UKTI has helped us to really focus on building our overseas market, so we'd recommend any business to see what they can achieve overseas," added Mr King.

Paul Keeling, UKTI in-



Ian King, of Sadler's Ales

ternational trade adviser in the Black Country, said: "Sadler's Ales is a very dynamic and enthusiastic company that is keen to explore as many export opportunities as it can."

"We've been working with the brewery for a few months now, offering support and guidance, and it is now starting to reap the rewards."

Businesses across the West Midlands who have yet to start exporting have had the chance to explore the overseas opportunities during UKTI's Exporting is Great Week, which continues until tomorrow (Friday) at the Advanced Manufacturing Technology Centre in Coventry.

Visitors to the Global Opportunities Summit, being held as part of this special week-long drive, will be able to find out about the thousands of live export opportunities that are available.

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Gay football team aim to kick down barriers

THE first gay and transgender football team in the Black Country is aiming to kick discrimination out of the game when they join the Wolverhampton Sunday League.

Newly-formed Black Country Fusion FC, managed by Andy Corfield, have started training and are set to take on other gay and transgender teams from up and down the country in friendly clashes ahead of the 2016/17 season in the Beacon League.

Lesbian players also train with the team, and Sky Stewart, co-chairman of the team, is hoping Fusion can break down barriers and prove successful on the pitch.

Chance

Sky said: "I think there is a gap in the market, there are a lot of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people who want to get into the game but feel like they can't because they'll be discriminated against."

"We want to give them the chance to play football in a safe environment with other people who won't judge them."

"We're going into the Beacon League in Wolverhampton on Sundays for the 2016-17 season, it'll be the first time a gay or transgender team has played in the league in Wolverhampton."

"The whole team isn't gay or transgender," Sky added. "We do have heterosexual players as well. The idea is to try to include everyone and break down barriers."

"The manager is openly gay, I'm openly transgender. Football should be about community, and that's what we're trying to achieve."

Growing up, Sky found it tough to get into the typically macho world of football. But now the Castlecroft



Fusion with their logo, George Davies, front, with Kev Shafti, Ben Davies, Dale Skitt, Kev Turner, David Horton-Williams and Domonic Latham

Rangers and Wolves supporter hopes the new team helps the game become more accessible to people the gay and trans community.

Sky said: "A lot of it is about body, getting changed in front of men and that kind of thing might make people uncomfortable."

"We want to make a stand, we want to say to people 'we're here'. 'We've got about six pre-season friendlies organised. We've got a team from Manchester coming down and another one from Liverpool, so some big teams."

"We've got about 10 players at the moment, so ideally we need another 10. I've got high expectations for the season, we've got some high class players."

Wolverhampton health insurance agency Paycare have offered sponsorship to the team, and will provide new home and away kits and equipment."

Anyone interested in joining the team can head along to training at the 3G pitch at City of Wolverhampton College, Wellington Road, Bilston, or call Sky on 07710 193990.

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Dreamland

40th Anniversary Celebration SALE

The family business was founded in 1976 by Mike Brown, who is such a familiar face in the Local Community that he is known as "Mike the Bed". The team of experienced staff is headed by manageress Carol Stock, who has been part of the Dreamland family since the beginning.

Dreamland has been helping people across the Midlands to get a good night's sleep for "40" years and to celebrate the anniversary, will be giving extra discounts on all beds to say thank you to customers for their support over the years.

Located in Mill Street, Brierley Hill - just a few minutes walk from the Merry Hill Centre - you'll find friendly and knowledgeable staff, all of whom understand the importance of getting the right bed for you. You'll receive impartial advice and a tailor-made solution to meet your needs from the firmer to softer beds upon which to rest your head.

The impressive range of beds includes memory foam and orthopaedic mattresses, beds with storage, pine and metal frames and beds especially for children. This is backed up by a large warehouse containing hundreds of beds and mattresses, meaning that your chosen product can be delivered as swiftly as required. Everything possible is done to make customers' lives easier, for instance, there's plenty of room to park at the rear of the store and Dreamland delivers all over the West Midlands.

Public demand for Dreamland's superlative customer service and premium products has seen the business expand four times in as many decades. Now, with the most extensive range they've ever had, means all styles and budgets are catered for; it's no surprise that there have been thousands of satisfied customers. Founded by Mike Brown, Dreamland is a family business that is proud to serve the Black Country and the wider Midlands region. Mike says: "We're very excited to have reached this milestone of 40 years and we're looking forward to continuing to serve our customers, old and new, for the next 40 and beyond."

We spend a third of our lives asleep, so there can be no better investment than a quality hand-made mattress and bed.

We pride ourselves on supplying only the best quality and we know that each handmade bed we sell provides pressure relief, comfort and support exactly where your body needs it."

Dreamland has come a long way since it first opened its doors in Mill Street, Brierley Hill, in the spring of 1976 with just 12 beds on show, it has now become renowned for quality and service. Dreamland stocks only manufacturers that are approved by the National Bed Federation and offers premium handmade beds, with mattresses filled with natural fillings such as wool, cashmere, alpaca and silk, help

to regulate your body temperature. But, whatever you choose, you'll be delighted at Dreamland's very competitive prices.

There are more than 100 bed models in stock at Dreamland, including Somnos, Relyon, Dunlopillo and Hypnos and you'll also find other leading brands such as Sealy, Myers, Silent Night, Mammoth and electric bed specialists Mi beds.

Instead of a delivery charge, customers are asked to make a donation, all of which goes to charity. Over the past few years, it has raised more than £125,000 for the Mary Stevens Hospice, thanks to the generosity of customers who give in lieu of delivery charge.

Dreamland will even collect your old bed and assemble your divan, more reasons why you'll sleep soundly in your new bed! Not surprisingly, Dreamland attracts

much of its business through word of mouth and recommendations.

Because they have been around for such a long time, people know they can rely on us. If you're looking to replace your tired old bed with a new model, look no further - Dreamland Bedding Centre, with its large free customer car park, is open seven days a week.

Opening times are Monday to Saturday 9am-5.30pm; Sundays 11am-4.30pm. Visit Dreamland Bedding Centre today at 23 Mill Street, Brierley Hill or telephone 01384 74166.



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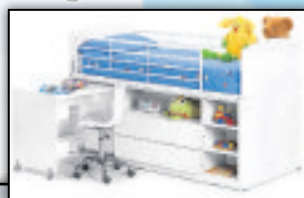


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Julian Clary: The Joy Of Mincing



Wednesday, 8pm New Alexandra Theatre, B'ham

The comedian and novelist looks back over his 30 years of camp comedy, ranging from causing TV outrage to becoming a family panto favourite, in The Joy of Mincing tour. See www.atgtickets.com/shows

Des O'Connor



Saturday, 7.30pm

Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton
The 84-year-old showbiz legend looks back at a glittering career that has seen him work with stars including Frank Sinatra, Buddy Holly, The Beatles and, of course, Morecambe and Wise. See www.grandtheatre.co.uk

Tell Me On A Sunday



Sunday, 7.30pm

New Alexandra Theatre, B'ham
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Kings And Captains
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The Strawbs
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Logic
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Mitch Benn: Don't Believe A Word
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Rough Works: New Material Night
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Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star

Beatlemania is fab for theatre again



From Mathew Street to Hurst Street – the Cavern recreated on stage in the Let It Be show coming to the Hippodrome

BEATLEMANIA returns to Birmingham Hippodrome next week when West End and Broadway hit Let It Be rocks onto the stage – 53 years after the original Fab Four performed on the Hippodrome stage.

The band performed at the theatre twice in 1963, first in March and then in November where their 10 song set included From Me To You, All My Loving, Twist and Shout, and She Loves You.

Celebrating the music of the world's most successful band in a spectacular concert, Let It Be charts the Merseyside group's meteoric rise

from humble beginnings in Liverpool's Cavern Club, through to height of Beatlemania to their later studio masterpieces.

Seen by more than one million people worldwide, Let It Be is packed with 40-plus of The Beatles' greatest hits including A Hard Day's Night, Help!, Ticket To Ride, Yesterday, Hey Jude, Come Together, All You Need Is Love and, of course, Let It Be.

The cast of Let It Be features a number of talented musicians from the West Midlands, including Wolverhampton-born Paul Canning who shares the role of John Lennon with

Birmingham's Reuven Gershon. Luke Roberts who plays Ringo Starr was born in Birmingham and lived in Leamington Spa. Emanuele Angeletti and Iain Hornal share the role of Paul McCartney, with Paul Mannion and John Brosnan playing George Harrison. They will be joined on stage by Michael Bramwell on keyboards.

Let It Be will be staged at Birmingham Hippodrome from Mon to Saturday, April 30, nightly plus matinees on Wednesday and Saturday. Tickets start from £13.50. Buy online at birminghamhippodrome.com or telephone 0844 338 5000.



Dial up a dark thriller

MADE famous by the Alfred Hitchcock movie starring Ray Milland and Grace Kelly, Dial M For Murder is coming to the stage at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday to Saturday, April 30.

Presented by talkingScarlet, the company behind last year's popular stage thriller The Ghost Train, Dial M For Murder stars former Coronation Street actor Oliver Mellor, pictured left as Tony Wendice, a manipulative former tennis pro who wants to get his hands on his wife's inheritance. Best known as Dr Matt Carter in the top ITV soap for three years, his other TV credits include Father Brown, Midsomer Murders and Doctors.

Wealthy

Playing the wealthy Mrs Sheila Wendice is Terri Dwyer, best known for her role as Ruth Osbourne in Hollyoaks. She also featured in three series of popular daytime show 60 Minute Makeover and is known for appearances on This Morning.

Brookside actor Marcus Hutton plays the rich wife's other man, Max Halliday. He has voiced hundreds of commercials and can be heard in Doctor Who audio dramas, as well as being remembered as Nathan Cuddington in the C4 soap.

Frederick Knott's intense and darkly gripping 1950s thriller promises plenty of twists and tension. It will be performed nightly with matinees on Wednesday and Saturday. See www.grandtheatre.co.uk or call 01902 429212. Tickets start from £13.50.

Saturday night disco fever with DJ PK

TICKETS have sold out for top comic Peter Kay's fundraising 'dance-a-thon party' in Birmingham on Saturday night with all of the profits going to Cancer Research UK.

The Barclaycard Arena will be transformed into a gigantic disco with DJ PK on the decks for what promises to be a memorable night out.

It is one of several giant fundraising parties the popular comedian is throwing at huge venues across the country in aid of the charity.

The disco-goers are being invited to wear fancy dress and to join Peter's 'Dance for Life' team at www.justgiving.com/teams/danceforlife

Acts from New York and New Zealand

NEW York duo We Are Scientists, who release their fifth album Helter Seltzer tomorrow, have a gig at Birmingham's O2 Institute on Wednesday.

Other upcoming highlights include New Zealand rising star Marlon Williams at the Hare and Hounds tonight (Thu). That Kings Heath venue also hosts quirky Lancashire pop couple The Lovely Eggs on Sunday and then London indie outfit Inheaven on Wednesday.

Downtown duo Macklemore & Ryan Lewis play the Barclaycard Arena on Tuesday, when Finnish 'folk-metal' outfit Korpiakani play the city's O2 Academy.

Hear blues sisters and a top soul man

THE Blues Caravan rolls into the Black Country to showcase the best female talent from the Ruf record label on Monday at Bilston's Robin 2 venue. The Blues Sisters show is a triple bill featuring Tasha Taylor, daughter of Stax soul legend Johnnie Taylor, sultry Finnish singer Ina Forsman and the highly-rated Canadian songstress Layla Zoe.

Fans of the genre can get a shot of hot R&B this side of the weekend when The James Hunter Six, led by the man described as the UK's best soul singer by Mojo, play Brum's O2 Institute 2 venue in Digbeth tomorrow night (Friday).

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*The "from" price and price bands vary for each show — see brochure/web page for details.

DAYS: 2 OR 3 DEPARTS: VARIOUS DATES



CHOICE



Michael McIntyre

Michael McIntyre's Big Show (BBC1, 7.15pm)

The comedian introduces another evening of entertainment at London's Theatre Royal. This week, he is joined on stage by fellow funnyman Josh Widdicombe, and introduces an acrobatic performance by Canadian duo Chilly and Fly. Bryan Adams and Jess Glynne provide the night's musical diversions, and singer Ronan Keating risks his personal and professional relationships when he hands Michael his mobile phone in Celebrity Sent To All. Plus, a locksmith who thinks he has come to fix a faulty lock at the theatre receives the surprise of his life in Unexpected Star.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** MasterChef. (R) **12.00** BBC News: Weather. **12.10** Football Focus. **1.00** The London Marathon – A Million Reasons to Run. **1.30** Live Snooker: The World Championship. The afternoon session on day eight at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield. **4.30** BBC News. **4.40** Regional Programme. **4.50** MOTD: Live FA Cup Semi-Final. Coverage of the first semi-final (Kick-off 5.15pm).

7.15 **Michael McIntyre's Big Show.** The comedian introduces performances by Josh Widdicombe, Bryan Adams, Jess Glynne and acrobatics duo Chilly and Fly. Plus, Ronan Keating takes part in Celebrity Sent To All.

8.05 **The National Lottery: Win Your Wish List.** Glasgow couple James and Karissa seek to win prizes from their personal wish list, and Julian Ovenden joins Kate Garraway for the Lotto and Thunderball draws.

8.55 **Casualty.** Big Mac's painkiller dependency starts to take its toll on his health, and Rita receives a number of complaints from nonexistent patients. Medical drama, starring Charles Dale.

9.45 **Mrs Brown's Boys.** Trevor has decided to work for a mission project in Africa, so Agnes resolves to give him an unforgettable send-off, while Cathy's family counselling session descends into chaos. (R)

10.15 **BBC News: Weather.**

10.35 **Match of the Day.** Mark Chapman presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, featuring Aston Villa v Southampton, Bournemouth v Chelsea and Liverpool v Newcastle United; National Lottery Update.

11.20 **Peter Kay's Comedy Shuffle.** The comedian looks back over his career, introducing clips from his TV shows, highlights from his numerous chat show appearances and his music videos. (R)

11.50 **The London Marathon – A Million Reasons to Run.** Gabby Logan investigates the stories of various runners, fundraisers and enthusiasts, who explain what inspired them to participate in the London Marathon. (R)

12.20 Snooker: World Championship Extra. **3.20** World Snooker: Crucible Classics. **5.20** Weather for the Week Ahead. **5.25** BBC News.

BBC2

7.55 **Film:** Fort Apache. (1948) **10.00** Live Snooker: The World Championship. **12.00** Rick Stein: From Venice to Istanbul. (R) **1.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **2.00** Escape to the Country. (R) **2.45** Money for Nothing. (R) **3.30** The Hairy Bikers' Pubs That Built Britain. (R) **4.00** Gardeners' World. (R) **4.30** Final Score. **5.15** Flog It! (R)

6.00 **Bake Off: Creme de la Creme.** Tom Kerridge welcomes three more teams of pastry chefs, and their challenges include making an Italian pastry called Stiglatelle, and Sticky Toffee Pudding. (R)

7.00 **Live Snooker: The World Championship.** Hazel Irvine introduces coverage of the third and final session on day eight at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, where another second-round match is set to conclude.

8.00 **Dad's Army.** Mainwaring is accused of leaving a light burning in the church hall during a blackout, and receives a summons to appear in court. (R)

8.30 **Shakespeare Live! From the RSC.** David Tennant assembles a host of luminaries from the worlds of film, theatre and music to celebrate the life, work and legacy of William Shakespeare, 400 years after his death. Taking up residence at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon, with the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall in attendance, David is joined by fellow actors Judi Dench, Ian McKellen, Meera Syal and Joseph Fiennes, musician Rufus Wainwright, rapper Akala and comedy star Tim Minchin, all of whom share their thoughts on the Bard's enduring influence on the performing arts, from his home medium of the theatre, through to opera, jazz, dance and musicals. Also includes contributions by performers from the English National Opera and The Royal Ballet.

10.30 **QI XL.** Extended edition. The Rev Richard Coles, Sara Pascoe, Bill Bailey and Alan Davies try to answer host Stephen Fry's questions on L-themed larks – a "Liable", as he calls it.

11.15 **Snooker: The World Championship.**

12.05 **Film:** Mesrine: Killer Instinct. (2008) **1.50** **Film:** Mesrine: Public Enemy Number One. (2008) **3.55** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITY: Bottom Knockor Street. **6.15** Bottom Knockor Street. (R) **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Sooty. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.30** Neds & Monsters. (R) **7.45** The Tom & Jerry Show. (R) **8.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.15** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.15** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. **12.05** ITV News: Weather. **12.14** Regional Programme. **12.15** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **1.15** Planet's Got Talent. (R) **1.45** 880 Champ. (R) **2.45** Film: Beethoven. (1992) Canine comedy, starring Charles Grodin. **4.25** The Wine Show. **5.30** Regional Programme; Weather. **5.40** ITV News: Weather.

6.00 **You've Been Framed! Bites Back!** Harry Hill narrates another hour-long special, showcasing embarrassing home-video submissions alongside clips that "take a bite" out of celebrity culture. Among tonight's featured hijinks are a man receiving a powerful electric shock to the nipple, an angry wife who throws a dart at her husband's leg, and a good example of why it is a bad idea to teach a toddler to operate a full-size tractor.

7.00 **Bang on the Money.** Teams from Essex and Newcastle battle it out to hit a specific target number "bang on" in a series of physical and mental challenges.

8.00 **Britain's Got Talent.** The nationwide talent search continues as Ant and Dec host the third round of auditions, in which more members of the public are invited to display their extraordinary talents, in an attempt to win the approval of judges Simon Cowell, Alesha Dixon, Amanda Holden and David Walliams.

9.15 **Play to the Whistle.** Professional boxer Anthony Joshua and comedians Kevin Bridges and Jon Richardson join Frank Lampard, Bradley Walsh and Romesh Ranganathan for the topical comedy challenge show.

10.00 **ITV News: Weather.**

10.15 **Film: The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift.** (2006) Action adventure, starring Lucas Black and Nathalie Kelley. **12.10** Jackpot247. **3.00** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **3.50** ITV News: Weather.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 Greater Manchester Marathon. **6.40** British GT Championship. **7.05** Brighton Marathon 2016. **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.00** The Morning Line. **10.00** Frasier. (R) **10.30** Frasier. (R) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.55** The Simpsons. (R) **12.25** The Simpsons. (R) **12.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.00** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Sandown Park, Ripon and Haydock Park. **4.30** A Place in the Sun: Summer Sun. **5.30** Homes by the Med.

6.30 **Channel 4 News.**

7.00 **The Secret World of Lego.** Documentary going behind the scenes at the toy company, following a design student as he seeks a coveted position with the company and two fans hatching money-making schemes. (R)

8.00 **Arnie Schwarzenegger's 50 Greatest Ever Stunts.** Actor and former Governor of California Arnold Schwarzenegger presents a countdown of the most spectacular stunts ever committed to film. The Terminator star famously insisted on performing many of his own stunts during his Hollywood action-movie heyday, and here, he highlights the achievements of fellow stars whose efforts produced thrilling set-pieces on-screen. However, Arnie does not limit himself to high-octane antics from the silver screen. He also showcases stand-alone feats, such as Jean Claude Van Damme's daring splits manoeuvre between two moving trucks, and Felix Baumgartner's free fall to Earth from the stratosphere. Includes commentary from fans, comedians, stunt coordinators and the daredevils themselves.

9.30 **Film: The Transporter.** (2002) An underworld courier lives by a simple code – to never ask what he is transporting. However, when he discovers his latest cargo is alive, his conscience gets the better of him and he faces a dangerous game of cat and mouse with his unknown but powerful employers. Action adventure, starring Jason Statham.

11.20 **Film: Contraband.** (2012) **1.20** Hollywood. (R) **3.30** Tricks of the Restaurant Trade. (R) **3.55** Selling Houses with Amanda Lamb. **4.50** Kirstie's Fill Your House for Free. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **8.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **9.30** The Saturday Show Live. **11.30** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.25** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.20** Police Interceptors. (R) **2.15** Police Interceptors. (R) **3.10** Now That's Funny! (R) **4.15** Now That's Funny! (R) **5.15** Toddlers Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **6.10** **NCIS: Los Angeles.** Deeks is forced to resume an old alias he hates in a bid to protect his best friend and chief informant from arms traffickers who want him dead.

7.05 **NCIS: New Orleans.** A US Marine, a waitress and a chef are shot dead at a diner, and LaSalle realises the culprit may be the same killer he and Pride failed to catch during their first case together.

8.00 **NCIS.** McGee deals with his father's recent death by writing him a letter detailing a case in which he and Abby tried to catch cyber-terrorists responsible for a city-wide internet outage.

8.55 **5 News Weekend.**

9.00 **The Championship: Football League Tonight.** Kelly Cates and George Riley present extended highlights of the weekend's matches from the Championship, including Derby County v Sheffield Wednesday at iPro Stadium, and Hull City v Leeds United at KCOM Stadium. Plus, a round-up of all the goals, the main talking points, and interviews with a selection of players and managers.

10.00 **Goal Rush: Football League Tonight.** Kelly Cates and George Riley present a round-up of the latest matches in League One and League Two, including Wigan Athletic v Southend United, and Bristol Rovers v Exeter City.

10.30 **NCIS: Greatest Ever Episodes.** The murder of a marine's wife is shown live on the internet and inquiries point to two housewives who were running their own pornographic website, but have since vanished. (R)

11.25 **NCIS: Greatest Ever Episodes.** A six-year-old boy claims his father has been kidnapped, and the agents learn the missing man is a lieutenant commander who has been working on a confidential report. (R)

12.15 SuperCasino. **3.10** The Best of Bad TV. (R) **4.20** Criminals: Caught on Camera. (R) **4.50** Divine Designs. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four

7.00 A History of Ancient Britain **8.00** Natural World **9.00** Hinterland **10.30** BBC: The Secret Files **12.30** Imagine – Bette Midler: The Divine Miss M **1.45** It's Only Rock 'n' Roll: Rock 'n' Roll at the BBC **2.45** BBC: The Secret Files **2.45** Close

ITV2

11.00 Britain's Got Talent **12.20** Britain's Got More Talent **1.25** The Almost Impossible Gameshow **2.25** Scorpion **3.20** Film: Batteries Not Included (1987) **4.25** FYI Daily **4.30** Film: Batteries Not Included (1987) **5.30** Film: Transylvania (2012) **6.30** FYI Daily **6.35** Film: Hotel Transylvania (2012) **7.15** Film: After Earth (2013) **8.15** FYI Daily **8.20** Film: After Earth (2013) **9.15** Britain's Got More Talent **10.15** Celebrity Juice **11.05** Family Guy **12.30** American Dad! **1.30** The Cleveland Show **2.15** @elevenish **2.40** Teleshopping **5.40** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3

12.30 Film: Man About the House (1974) **1.30** FYI Daily **1.35** Film: Man About the House (1974) **2.00** Live FIA Formula E Championship. The Paris ePrix. **4.30** BRDC Formula 4 Championship Highlights **5.30** The Darts Mavericks **6.30** The Big Fish Off **7.30** Film: Space Cowboys (2000) **8.30** FYI Daily **8.35** Film: Space Cowboys (2000) **10.05** Film: Get Carter (2000) **11.05** FYI Daily **11.10** Film: Get Carter (2000) **12.15** Film: The Fog (1980) **1.15** FYI Daily **1.20** Film: The Fog (1980) **2.00** Hell on Wheels **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen

ITV4

12.30 British Touring Car Championship Highlights **2.00** Live FIA Formula E Championship. The Paris ePrix. **4.30** BRDC Formula 4 Championship Highlights **5.30** The Darts Mavericks **6.30** The Big Fish Off **7.30** Film: Space Cowboys (2000) **8.30** FYI Daily **8.35** Film: Space Cowboys (2000) **10.05** Film: Get Carter (2000) **11.05** FYI Daily **11.10** Film: Get Carter (2000) **12.15** Film: The Fog (1980) **1.15** FYI Daily **1.20** Film: The Fog (1980) **2.00** Hell on Wheels **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen

E4

11.30 Baby Daddy **12.30** How I Met Your Mother **1.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **2.30** The Goldbergs **3.55** Film: Dear John (2010) **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: Tower Heist (2011) **11.05** Gogglebox **12.40** Rude Tube **1.45** The IT Crowd **2.45** How I Met Your Mother

Film4

11.40 A Monster in Paris (2011) **1.00** City of Ember (2008) **2.50** Carry On Dick (1974) **4.40** Congo (1995) **6.45** The Women (2008) **9.00** Unknown (2011) **11.15** Filth (2013) **1.10** V/H/S/2 (2013) **3.10** Close

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

Killer Collector, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Two women at an auction unwittingly purchase a storage locker belonging to a serial killer that contains evidence of his crimes. They soon find themselves in a desperate race to uncover the truth before the murderer tracks them down. Thriller, directed by and starring Casper Van Dien. (2015)

TUESDAY

Nightmare from the Past, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Two decades after four high school students accidentally killed a mansion's owner, a mother faces a ghost from her youth in the form of the obsessed ex-con who paid the price for the friends' crimes. Thriller, starring Ashley Scott. (2015)

WEDNESDAY

Heartbreakers, Channel 4, 1.30am
Mother and daughter Max and Page develop a canny system of conning rich bachelors out of a fortune. Max marries the target, then Page seduces him, allowing for a lucrative divorce settlement. However, the scheme is threatened when Page falls in love, while a former victim tracks Max down hoping to give their marriage another chance. Comedy, starring Sigourney Weaver, Jennifer Love Hewitt, Gene Hackman, Ray Liotta and Jason Lee. (2001)



Tomorrow Never Dies, Friday, ITV, 10.40pm

THURSDAY

Cradle of Lies, Channel 5, 3.10pm
A woman awakes from a coma with no memory, until a scar on her abdomen stimulates flashes of her past and she remembers giving birth while she was unconscious. Thriller, starring Nicole de Boer. (2015)

FRIDAY

Tomorrow Never Dies, ITV, 10.40pm
James Bond joins forces with a Chinese agent to foil a media mogul's scheme to start a war between their countries. Using an undetectable stealth ship, the press baron plans an attack on both nations' navies, knowing they will blame each other – giving him exclusive global media coverage of the resulting conflict. Spy adventure, starring Pierce Brosnan, Jonathan Pryce and Michelle Yeoh. (1997)

Stage stars celebrate Shakespeare's skills

You can run but you can't hide from the Bard – he's everywhere, almost omnipotent, whether you realise it or not.

Many well-worn everyday phrases first appeared in his works, while his stories continue to have a major influence on popular culture today, so it seems only right that we should celebrate his life and legacy – even if it is on the 400th anniversary of his death.

"BBC2 is playing a central role in the BBC's Shakespeare celebrations and I'm delighted we will be showing this very special piece which typifies the new ambition and scale we are bringing to arts programming on the channel," explains Kim Shillinglaw, controller of BBC2 and BBC4.

David Tennant may be best known for his starring roles in Doctor Who and Broadchurch, but he's no stranger to William Shakespeare's works, having appeared on stage in the likes of Hamlet, Love's Labours Lost, Much Ado About Nothing and Richard II.

He's also hugely popular, particularly with younger viewers, so is

perhaps the ideal person to front this two-hour-long programme – he has the knowledge of the subject to carry it off, and the appeal to attract those who might not otherwise have tuned in.

Tennant will be joined on stage at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-Upon-Avon by his fellow actors Judi Dench, Ian McKellen, Meera Syal and Joseph Fiennes, musician Rufus Wainwright, rapper Akala and comedy star Tim Minchin, all of whom share their thoughts on the Bard's enduring influence on the performing arts, from his home medium of the theatre, through to opera, jazz, dance and musicals.

There's also a chance to see contributions by performers from the English National Opera and The Royal Ballet.

"Shakespeare gives us a 360 degree view of what it is to be human and has inspired creativity across every art form," says Gregory Doran, the RSC's artistic director. "This live event is the highlight of what will be an extraordinary year for Shakespeare fans, and gives us a chance to

celebrate just how far his genius has travelled, influencing artists down the centuries and across the world."

As Doran says, there are more special programmes and events on their way from the BBC and RSC.

"Our ambition is to get more people excited about Shakespeare than ever before – through drama, great performance, documentary, festivals and social media too," reveals Tony Hall, director-general of the BBC. "We're partnering with talent right across the country and delighted to be working with the RSC. 2016 is going to be the biggest celebration of Shakespeare we've ever put on - for everyone."

So, keep your eye out for a heap of Shakespearean goodies in the future, including a retelling of A Midsummer Night's Dream by Russell T Davies, which will star Maxine Peake, Matt Lucas, Bernard Cribbins and Elaine Paige, and there will also be three more episodes of The Hollow Crown, this time featuring an all-star cast that includes Benedict Cumberbatch, Sophie Okonedo, Hugh Bonneville and Michael Gambon.



David Tennant (right) presents Shakespeare Live! From the RSC, Saturday, BBC2, 8.30pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

Flowers
Channel 4, 10pm

New series. Comedy about an eccentric family struggling to hold themselves together, beginning with a double bill. Children's author Maurice and his music teacher wife Deborah live in a crumbling old house with his ailing mother Hattie and their maladjusted 25-year-old twins Amy and Donald. An already black day for Maurice turns into a nightmare when Deborah insists on celebrating their anniversary, while Amy and Donald vie for the affections of their lovely neighbour Abigail.

Marcella
ITV, 9pm

In the recent second series of Happy Valley, Sarah Lancashire was briefly a suspect in a murder case due to her prior history with the victim, but it seemed no one genuinely thought she'd done it – they just wanted to officially rule her out. However, if it becomes common knowledge that Marcella Backland, the volatile heroine of this detective series, was the one of the last people to see Grace Gibson alive, she might genuinely be in the frame, thanks to that very nasty temper of hers. So, it's not surprising that the detective is keen to find the taxi driver from outside Gibson's house to find out if he

can place her there on the night of murder. Meanwhile, an aborted attack on an elderly man gives the police a new lead in the Grove Park Killings.

TUESDAY
Fierce
ITV, 8pm

Steve Backshall travels to Guyana, home to gigantic anaconda, piranha, jaguar and other lethal predators. His adventure begins by flying 340-miles south-west from the capital Georgetown to the remote Central Rupununi rainforest. He also visits a remote stretch of the rainforest on the Mapiari River, and searches for an electric eel. Aside from tracking down the bullet ant, so named because one sting feels like being shot, Steve also holds a bird-eating tarantula, and gets a rare sighting of the endangered giant river otter.

WEDNESDAY
MasterChef
BBC1, 9pm

It's the semi-finals, which calls for a huge challenge – and the remaining eight contestants are

about to face their toughest task to date. They are heading to the biggest naval base in Western Europe, ready to serve lunch to members of the Royal Navy on board the anti-submarine frigate HMS Northumberland. Split into two teams of four and given a kitchen in a specially constructed catering tent, they'll have less than four hours to create two main courses and a dessert to feed 110 members of the ship's company. Whichever team's efforts aren't judged quite shipshape by judges John Torode and Gregg Wallace will have to head back to the MasterChef kitchen for a cook-off, using leftovers from the previous challenge.



Flowers, Monday, Channel 4, 10pm

THURSDAY
Line of Duty
BBC2, 9pm

The third series of Jed Mercurio's police procedural began with a big twist when Daniel Mays' bad guy was killed off at the end of episode one. After four

equally gripping episodes which delved further into the corruption scandal hinted at in series one and two - and reintroduced Keeley Hawes as anti-hero Lindsay Denton - it seems the feature-length finale promises to up the ante as one of the AC-12 officers finds themselves on the other side of the interview table on suspicion of murder. AC-12 legal counsel Gill Biggeloe puts pressure on Supt Ted Hastings, only for new evidence to turn the inquiry on its head. An undercover investigation may provide the key - but will the unit ever uncover the truth about 'the Caddy'? Martin Compston, Vicky McClure, Adrian Dunbar and Polly Walker star.

FRIDAY
The Secret
ITV, 9pm

New series. Drama set in 1990 Northern Ireland, starring James Nesbitt as respected dentist Colin Howell, who falls for Hazel Buchanan at his local Baptist church and embarks upon a passionate affair. Wanting to remain in the church, Colin refuses to consider divorce, but he and Hazel are desperate to find some way to be together. When Lesley's father dies and she contemplates suicide, Colin believes that he has found a way forward and both enter a deadly pact. With Genevieve O'Reilly, Laura Pyper and Glen Wallace.



Time to play

nativemonster.com

The new entertainment website for the region

NATIVE MONSTER
Entertainment Unleashed

BRAIN GYM No.374

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.

16	23	16	26	20	26	12	19
8	13	11	16	7	14	4	
	26	4		18			25
4	14	11	4	22	19	12	11
	2			8		17	
16	I	N	2	19	8	6	11
			20		8		25
22	8	21	12	4	3	12	24
8		12		1	15		8
8				14	11	23	12
10	20	19	13	20	8		8
	9			19	20	3	5
3	12	14	22	12	9		26

F	D	P	X	A	K	M	C	R	Y	Q	N	W
J	S	Z	G	B	U	O	T	E	H	L	V	I

1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

Cryptic Clues:

Across

- 4. Wrongly name the girl, we hear, by a telephone conversation (7)
- 8. This clue is not to be believed (6)
- 9. It has a pronounced similarity to another word (7)
- 10. Takes steps to show the markings of tyres (6)
- 11. Hold back – farther back! (6)
- 12. Add to the number in the fold (8)
- 18. Nothing follows an order for task force (8)
- 20. The Government ease restrictions – a tricky problem is seen in this (6)
- 21. Men go crazy after one Shakespearean woman (6)
- 22. Circulates advertisement in press arrangement (7)
- 23 & 16 Dn. Elves of no great standing (6,6)
- 24. This shows the concentration of matter contained in the volume (7)

Down

- 1. Will certainly ruin act, if out of order (7)
- 2. Exaggerate to increase the tension (7)
- 3. Overcome – because subscription hasn't yet been paid? (6)
- 5. The more this varies, the more the heat is the same! (8)
- 6. They provide splendid cover for the capitals of rulers (7)
- 7. Take a gamble on the fellows being non-professionals (6)
- 13. Certify as satisfactory an account with favourable balance (8)
- 14. Dark times, we hear, for chivalrous characters (7)
- 15. What the jumpers did is limited (7)
- 16. See 23 Across
- 17. A fool holds fixed property of the deceased (6)
- 19. Biographical record of me in the sea in France (6)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
8							
10				9			
12				11			
					14		15
16	17	18		19			
20							
22				21			
					23		
24							

Quick Clues:

Across

- 4. Important (7)
- 8. Referee (6)
- 9. Stranded (7)
- 10. Deadly (6)
- 12. Changeable (8)
- 18. Absurd (8)
- 20. Energy (6)
- 21. Unfold (6)
- 22. Erased (7)
- 23. Contusion (6)
- 24. By now (7)

Down

- 1. Survive (7)
- 2. Parvenu (7)
- 3. Fleet of warships (6)
- 5. Contrive (8)
- 6. Development (6)
- 7. Sinew (6)
- 13. To favour (8)
- 14. Applause (7)
- 15. Changed (7)
- 16. Wicked (6)
- 17. Give (6)
- 19. Secret (6)

Sudoku

	5	8	6	7				
3		7		5		9		
		7			4			
	3	4	1			5		
6			5	7			4	
8		6	2		1			
	9			2				
	2	7	3			6		
5			1	8	9			

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

5	6	2	3	7	9	1	4	8
3	8	7	5	1	4	2	9	5
4	9	1	2	5	8	6	3	7
2	7	9	8	6	5	3	1	4
8	5	4	9	3	1	7	6	2
1	3	6	4	2	7	8	5	9
9	4	3	1	8	2	5	7	6
6	2	5	7	4	3	9	8	1
7	1	8	5	9	6	4	2	3

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Stock-market; 9 Rip; 10 Unhealthy; 11 Lacks; 13 Whistle; 14 Sounds; 16 Aitire; 18 Nitrate; 19 Light; 20 Secretary; 21 Tar; 22 Hard-hearted. Down: 2 Top; 3 Clubs; 4 Mohawk; 5 Realist; 6 Entitling; 7 Artlessness; 8 Type-setters; 12 Crustacea; 15 Dead-end; 17 Sesame; 19 Layer; 21 Tee. QUICK - Across: 1 Acknowledge; 9 Put; 10 Vigilance; 11 Recur; 13 Apparel; 14 Punish; 16 beaten; 18 Imagine; 19 cadet; 20 Tangerine; 21 Tan; 22 Traditional. Down: 2 Cut; 3 Never; 4 Wigwag; 5 Eclipse; 6 Generated; 7 Appropriate; 8 Wellingtons; 12 Container; 15 Stipend; 17 Desist; 19 Credo; 21 Tea.

Quiz

- 1. What do we call the city Den Haag?
- 2. To whom are the Old Testament Psalms traditionally ascribed?
- 3. Which US state is nicknamed the Centennial State?
- 4. Which former Blue Peter presenter was the first civilian in Britain to free-fall from five miles up?
- 5. Which race did legendary ruler Hengist command?

- 6. Which part of the body is affected by glaucoma?
- 7. Who wrote the opera Carmen?
- 8. Through which mountain range do the St Bernard Passes pass?
- 9. In which constellation is Rigel?
- 10. Which fruit comes from the tree Prunus persica?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 South Africa; 2 Hormone

Replacement Therapy; 3 South Korea;

4 A tidal wave; 5 Sherry; 6 Duke of

Marlborough; 7 1982; 8 Tangerine; 9 Mark

Twain; 10 Richard II.

Niner: NUMERICAL

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

2472 gives a song,
51942 gives a musical drama,
856232 gives a musical composition.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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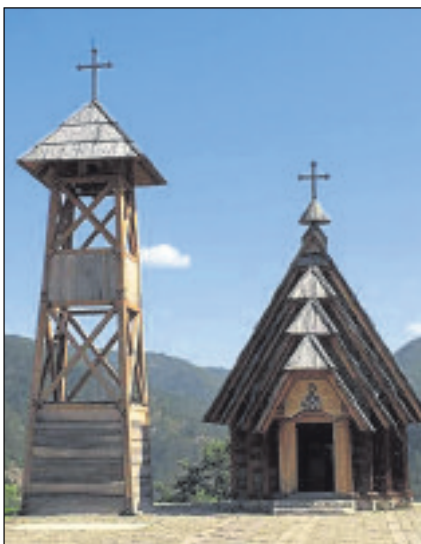
Go with the flow – the house on stilts on the River Drina



A woman sells knitwear in Drvengrad



Inside the Pustinja Monastery, decorated with frescoes of Serbian saints



The tiny church in Drvengrad

Europe's best kept secret with magical sights round every corner

OFTEN overlooked in favour of its popular neighbour Croatia, Serbia doesn't really register as a top choice for a holiday.

I have to admit, my own knowledge of the country, which celebrates a decade of independence this year, is patchy.

Aside from Slobodan Milosevic's well-documented years of tyrannical rule in the 90s, when the country was part of the former Yugoslavia, I know next to nothing. But images of hardship belong to a distant past; instead a trendy and affordable short break destination is emerging.

After a two-hour flight from Heathrow, I arrive in Belgrade. The Serbian capital has been destroyed and rebuilt more than 40 times, resulting in a patchwork of architectural designs. I gravitate towards the

By Frances Wright

Savamala district with its bohemian bars and riverfront clubs. Seeking penance after a hard night on the tiles, I head west of Belgrade to the Pustinja Monastery in the village of Pocuta. Originally built in the 13th century during the reign of King Dragutin, the monastery now standing dates back to the 17th century.

I'm greeted by a group of resident nuns, who appear to be almost as old as the monastery itself. Overcoming the language barrier, they welcome us with a traditional offering of honey and hot water and lead us on a tour through the building decorated with frescoes of Serbian saints, including St Sava.

Even more unusual is fairytale village Drvengrad, part of the picturesque Zlatibor district, surrounded by the Tara National

Park and a three-hour drive from Belgrade.

It was built in 2003 as a film set by the acclaimed Serbian film director Emir Kusturica for his film *Life Is A Miracle*. It is now a fully functioning village where Emir lives and hosts his annual film festival.

Emir grew up in war-torn Sarajevo and has said his desire to build Drvengrad was born from the destruction of his own town.

Desire

All the streets are named after people Emir respects and admires, such as footballer Diego Maradona, revolutionary Che Guevara and, of course, national hero and tennis ace Novak Djokovic.

The bizarre settlement has 25 timber cottages where tourists can stay, a church, the Stanley Kubrick cinema and an ideological prison, where imaginary inhabitants include those who still live among us, such as

George Bush. I'm particularly enamoured by the church, a small wooden structure with portraits of Madonna and child.

Delicious traditional Serbian food is served at the village restaurant, where I dine on meat, cheese and lots and lots of bread. Dishes are inspired by a number of cultures, borrowing from German, Greek and Turkish cuisine. Best of all, it's cheap – a three-course meal with wine for £6.

Near to Drvengrad, on the border of Serbia and Bosnia, is the stunning river Drina, where I take a rafting trip. We calmly float past rural orthodox churches, until we reach an isolated house on stilts near the town of Bajina Basta. It was built by local boys in 1968 and has been standing on a rock for nearly 50 years.

Serbia feels like Europe's best-kept secret, with magical experiences around every corner.

commercial feature

Celebrate chef's award with spicy special offer



Award-winning head chef Abdul Ahad receiving his award alongside staff at Shenapur restaurant

Abdul Ahad is more used to creating and serving up plates of mouthwatering dishes for diners as head chef of the Shenapur restaurant in Hagley, but recently Abdul received a very special plate of his own.

Abdul won Regional Chef Of The Year in the Curry Life Chef Awards 2015.

Abdul's food is celebrated and loved by all who are lucky enough to experience it.

Specialising in traditional sub con-

tinental cuisine, predominantly from Bangladesh, Abdul follows a simple formula of high quality, masterfully spiced food, cooked fresh to order.

The Shenapur, which has a contemporary yet informal interior, has been serving up the finest Indian Cuisine in Hagley for more than 19 years and has become one of the most popular destinations in the West Midlands for Indian food lovers but Abdul's skills and creativity have raised the bar still further since his appointment as head chef earlier in the year.

Abdul has devoted 35 years to his craft, building on his knowledge and self-taught creativity.

He particularly loves cooking with fish and Shenapur's menu reflects this, offering monkfish, salmon, sea bass and lobster which is bought fresh and cooked Bangladeshi style.

Other signature dishes include meltily tender lamb shank, tandoori chicken norotoba cooked with minced meat herbs and spices and tellapia bhuna, a traditional Bengal fish dish.

Shenapur's proprietor Angur Ali said: "Abdul is very keen to demonstrate his unique culinary skills, flexibility and passion for Indian cooking and he and his team are happy to style any dish to suit your personal taste."

"So if you are a regular diner with us, or are considering visiting for the first time to experience unforgettable food served up in an informal and friendly atmosphere, there has never been a better time to join us with a 10 per cent reduction against the cost of your meal on production of our advertisement."

"We hope to see you soon."

We are proud to introduce new Head Chef 'Ahad' and our exciting new menu.

***10% reduction against the cost of your meal on production of this advertisement when dining in or collecting your takeaway.**

86, Worcester Road, West Hagley. DY9 0NJ
Reservations 01562 884867

*We are sorry this offer is not available on our Sunday Evening fixed price menu.

Large detached family home has six bedrooms



A SUBSTANTIAL detached family home in Stream Road, Kingswinford, is for sale through Taylors at £549,000.

It has a porch, reception hall, cloaks/WC, huge living room with a log burner, formal dining room, a breakfast room/snug, extended fitted breakfast kitchen, and laundry. The house has six double bedrooms, en-suite shower rooms, luxury fitted bathroom, gas central heating and double glazing. It has automatic gates, garage and huge rear garden.

Contact Taylors estate agents on (01884) 401777 or visit www.taylors-estateagents.co.uk website.



halls.gb.com

Halls

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Large Quantity of Timber, Building Materials, Scaffolding, Insulation, Steel and Slabs.

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SALE COMMENCES AT 10:15 AM

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pritchard**
with McCartneys

chartered surveyors
estate agents
auctioneers



6pm Tuesday 7th June 2016 at Hogarths Stone Manor Hotel, Stone. DY10 4PJ



Charlton Lane, Hartlebury

"Un-polished gem" for sale under the hammer to close an Estate! - a captivating non-listed stone built detached country residence of real distinction with BIG potential set some 100ft back from the lane-side and sitting on ABOUT 2.6 ACRES of good level grounds with large paddock. Here is the perfect chance for your very own "grand design" in a prime rural setting surrounded by open Greenbelt countryside & yet with swift & simple access to Worcester City & M5. EPC: E
STOURPORT OFFICE 01299 822060
To be offered for sale by Public Auction subject to prior sale, special conditions and reserve.

Guide Price £400,000-£500,000



Hanstone Road, Stourport DY13 0HH

FOR SALE UNDER THE HAMMER TO CLOSE AN ESTATE and to be sold on the open market for the first time ever, in a quite original state but with huge potential! - a substantial 1950's 2-bedroom semi detached property, un-typical for its exceptionally broad style - the house itself, externally, measuring over 10m/33ft across! The property also commands an enormous frontage standing some 115ft back from the kerbside whilst to the rear there are further level gardens plus REAR DRIVEWAY PARKING with direct vehicular access off William Coley Place. All-in-all a rare and special opportunity. Freehold.

Vacant possession upon completion. EPC: G
STOURPORT OFFICE 01299 822060

To be offered for sale by Public Auction subject to prior sale, special conditions and reserve.

Guide Price £80,000-£100,000



Trimple Lane, Bewdley DY12 1RL

Incredibly rare Greenbelt paddock land for the keeping of horses, extending to about 1.53 acres with a Registered Title. There is a gated frontage to Trimple Lane plus parking, in a highly accessible location not far from the Bellmans Cross Inn and, most importantly, the land also includes a valuable large high quality modern stable with external measurements of 11m x 5.65m - this having been approved by Wyre Forest District Council under application no: WF0016/05. Mains electricity and water. In the Greenbelt but with possible long term 'hope value' for future development. Vacant possession upon completion.

STOURPORT OFFICE 01299 822060

To be offered for sale by Public Auction subject to prior sale, special conditions and reserve.

Guide Price £80,000-£100,000



Old Chester Road South, Kidderminster DY10 1XL

A 2-bedroom end terraced Victorian cottage in a very private position standing a long way back from the kerbside, behind it's own spacious lawned fore-gardens, screened by mature hedges. The property has already been modernised but would benefit from further improvement and up-grading. Enclosed rear garden, vacant possession upon completion.

Energy Rating D

STOURPORT OFFICE 01299 822060

To be offered for sale by Public Auction subject to prior sale, special conditions and reserve.

Guide Price £70,000-£90,000

31 Worcester St. Kidderminster Worcs DY10 1EQ Tel: 01562 822244
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1 High St. Stourport on Severn Worcs DY13 8DJ Tel: 01299 822060
Fax: 01299 827066 email: stourport@phippsandpritchard.co.uk

Plug-in market gearing up

Launched back in April 2014, the award-winning Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV has effectively defined the emergence of the UK's plug-in hybrid sector.

In 2013, the year before its arrival, the total plug-in hybrid market across all marques stood at just 989.

Two years on there are 21,053 Mitsubishi Outlander PHEVs on the UK's roads.

Lance Bradley, managing director of Mitsubishi Motors in the UK, said:

'Introducing new technology is very challenging and to sell over 21,000 Outlander PHEVs in the first two years has been an incredible achievement.'

'People are being increasingly attracted to environmental vehicle performance and the economy it delivers. However they still want to have a car that is great to drive and doesn't cost significantly more than an equivalent traditional petrol or diesel powered car.'

Continuing the success story, in the first three months of 2016 total market registrations of plug-in hybrid passenger cars are 7,468. Over half of which are Mitsubishi Outlander PHEVs.

In two short years Outlander PHEV sales have overtaken every other plug-in hybrid and pure electric car, even passing vehicles that have been around since 2011 such as the Nissan Leaf.

The Outlander PHEV has become the UK's number one choice.

It's not difficult to see why it is proving so popular. It boasts impressive fuel economy and ultra-low emissions – in a vehicle with the go-anywhere ability of four-wheel-drive. Combining electric and petrol power it has a range of 541 miles – 32 miles in electric mode alone, which is more than enough to accommodate the average daily commute.



Fiat's attractive offers for business car users

Fiat UK has launched a competitive new contract hire promotion aimed specifically at business users.

There are extremely attractive offers available across the Fiat range but a highlight will undoubtedly be the Fiat 500X 1.6 MultiJet II 120hp Pop Star which is available from just £155 per month (excluding VAT) with a low £954 initial rental (ex VAT) and a sensible 10,000 mile annual mileage allowance over the course of the 36 month contract.

With excellent fuel economy of 68.9MPG (official combined cycle), CO2 emissions of just 109g/km and inexpensive regular maintenance, the Fiat 500X's low running costs will keep the accounts department happy, while the user gets to enjoy the distinctive styling, superb ride and handling characteristics, impressive refinement and high standard specification of the new Fiat 500X Pop Star, which includes 17-inch alloy wheels, rear parking sensors,

dual-zone climate control, cruise control and a five-inch Uconnect touchscreen infotainment system with Bluetooth audio streaming, USB port, DAB digital radio and satellite navigation all as standard.

Monthly rentals for business users wishing to drive a Fiat 500X start at just £133 over three years for the Fiat 500X Pop 1.6 E-Torq 110hp with a £798 initial rental. For more information, including full terms and conditions of the Business Contract Hire arrangement, business users can contact any participating Fiat dealership in the UK, where this promotion can also be tailored to the specific requirements of individual business users.

With Fiat Contract Hire, the customer will have fixed costs, clear budgeting and no resale to deal with at the end of the contract.

Interested business users can visit <http://www.fiat.co.uk/fleet-services/fleet/contract-hire-offers> or contact the Fiat UK Business Centre on 01753 519 442 during business hours or email fiat.fleet@fcagroup.com

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expressandstar.com/drivetime



Savings on seven-seat Turismo of up to £1,250

Following the sales success of its seven-seat Turismo MPV in recent months, SsangYong Motor UK has increased its deliveries of cars, and is currently able to offer a 'half-price upgrade' to customers selecting the next model up in the range. (See note below).

Customers ordering the following cars now benefit from savings of up to £1,250:

- Turismo EX adds alloy wheels, leather upholstery, heated seats and privacy glass over the SE model – half-price upgrade: £1,000.

- Turismo EX auto adds the new 7-speed Mercedes-Benz automatic transmission – half-price upgrade over the EX manual: £750.

- Turismo ELX auto adds 17" alloy wheels, 4x4, solar glass and automatic windscreen wipers – half-price upgrade over an EX auto: £1,250

Offering family and business users a car to transport seven adults together with their luggage, the SsangYong Turismo blends multi-role flexibility, a comfortable ride and the equipment of a luxury saloon, and is almost without rival.

At over five metres long and with a three-metre wheel-base, the car is larger than a standard sized MPV people carrier, and powered by a highly efficient 2.2 litre Euro 6 diesel engine.

The Turismo also now offers the choice of a 6-speed manual transmission or new Mercedes-Benz 7-speed automatic.

The car provides a huge interior space where seven adults can travel in supreme comfort with their luggage loaded in the back, without having to compromise on passenger accommodation.

There are three rows of seats as well as a large load space which can be further increased by removing the third row completely. This gives a massive load carrying capability of between 875 litres with seven adults seated, through to two adults and 3,146 litres of load space.

While rear-wheel drive features on the SE and EX, the top of the range ELX includes selectable 4x4 with low ratio as standard. This makes the Turismo ELX a car you can rely on, and is especially safe and practical whether towing a caravan, horsebox or boat trailer, or when driving across a slippery field.

All Turismo models have an impressive two-ton towing capability.

The new Turismo utilises double wishbone front suspension and rear independent multi-link suspension for executive saloon-style ride quality. This set-up offers a quiet and comfortable driving environment with firm body control, a flat ride and optimum stability regardless of the road conditions.

All models in the SsangYong range are covered by a best-in-class five-year limitless mileage warranty. Designed to be totally transparent and give customers complete peace of mind, 'limitless' means just that: Not a maximum mileage condition that some brands impose in their small print. All the major mechanical components are covered including wheel bearings, suspension joints and bushes, steering joints, shock absorbers and even the audio system. Wearable components such as clutch discs and brake friction materials, which could have their life reduced by poor driving, are covered for one year or 12,500 miles, and the battery and paintwork for three years.

SsangYong cars are manufactured in South Korea by SsangYong Motor, which is 73 per cent owned by the Indian engineering conglomerate Mahindra & Mahindra, and imported into the UK by SsangYong Motor UK. Established in 1954, it is Korea's oldest vehicle manufacturer and only 4x4 and SUV specialist producer. There are currently some 60 SsangYong dealers covering England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, with new locations being added to the network all the time.

- Offers end June 30, 2016, are available from participating SsangYong dealers, and subject to stock availability. Terms and conditions apply.

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13 C4 1.6 VTR+ Auto Brown Only 6000 Miles	£7,995
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62 Note 1.6 N-Tec+ Auto Black Only 7000 Miles	£7,995
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62 B Max 1.6 Zetec Auto Gold Only 14000 Miles	£8,495
62 Micra 1.2 Acenta Auto Red Only 17000 Miles	£6,995
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Citroen

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62 C4 Picasso 1.6 HDI Edition Grey 29k	£9,495
13 C4 G Picas 1.6 HDI VTR+ Grey 26k	£10,795

Ford

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13 C-Max 1.6 TDCI Titanium Bronze 18k	£10,995
62 Focus 1.6 Zetec Black 32k	£8,395
61 Focus 1.6 TDCI Zetec Blue 24k	£8,495
09 Focus 1.6 TDCI Zetec Silver 78k	£4,495
08 Focus 2.0 TDCI Coupe Cab Red	£3,995

Nissan

62 Note 1.5 DCI N-Tec+ Blue 26k	£7,495
08 Note 1.6 Acenta Silver 45k	£3,795
62 Juke 1.5 DCI Acenta Black 29k	£9,995
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personal

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general

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Ted Vizard - 'peace season' boss



Mick McCarthy won the Championship



Current boss Kenny Jackett -12th on list



Ronnie Allen led Wolves into top flight in 1967



John Barnwell with the League Cup in 1980

Kenny manages to make top list

WOLVES boss Kenny Jackett is the 17th longest-serving manager in the country - and there's a team's worth in front of him for service at Molineux.

Of the club's 28 permanent chiefs since their formation in 1877, Jackett, with nearly three years at the helm, is 12th.

Initially the Wolves team was selected by a committee, headed up by the club secretary, George Worrall was the first for seven years and eight months from August 1887 to May 1885, with Jack Addenbrooke replacing him that August.

He is still the longest-serving boss in Wolves' history, with a 36 years and 10 months reign and led Wolves to the FA Cup twice.

The club appointed their first full-time manager, George Jobey in June 1922. He lasted nearly two years before Albert Hoskins was brought in, while Fred Scotchbrook lasted just over a year.

Wembley

Major Frank Buckley arrived in July 1927 and his 15 years and eight months saw the club reach the First Division, finishing runners-up twice in the top flight. A 4-1 defeat to Portsmouth at Wembley saw them lose the 1939 FA Cup final, but they did win the 1942 League 'War' Cup.

Ted Vizard came on board in April 1944, leading them to third in the first 'peace time' season of 1946-47.

Come the summer of 1948, his assistant Stan Cullis would take charge, going on to become the club's most successful manager and make Wolves the biggest team in the country. Three First Division titles, two FA Cups and one Charity Shield came their way along with the first foray into European football in what is

SPORTING MEMORIES

By Craig Birch

Longest-serving Wolves managers:

- 1: Jack Addenbrooke (August 1885-June 1922) 35 years 10 months;
- 2: Stan Cullis (June 1948-September 1964) 16 years three months;
- 3: Major Frank Buckley (July 1927-March 1944) 15 years eight months;
- 4: George Worrall (August 1877-May 1885) Seven years eight months;
- 5: Bill McGarry (November 1968-May 1976) Seven years six months;
- 6: Graham Turner (October 1986-March 1994) Seven years five months;

- 7: Mick McCarthy (July 2006-February 2012) Five years seven months;
- 8: Ted Vizard (April 1944-May 1948) Three years 11 months;
- 9: Dave Jones (January 2001-November 2004) Three years nine months;
- 10: Ronnie Allen (September 1965-November 1968) Three years two months;
- 11: John Barnwell (November 1978-January 1982) Three years two months;
- 12: Kenny Jackett (May 2013-Present) Two years 10 months.

now the Champions League. He was sacked in September 1964 and the club were relegated that season. Andy Beattie was in charge when they went down, he left in September 1965, with Ronnie Allen taking them back up in 1967.

Another purple patch came under Bill McGarry, who left First Division rivals Ipswich Town to take over from the sacked Allen in November 1968. His seven-and-a-half year reign saw Wolves lift the Texaco Cup in 1971, before losing the UEFA Cup final to Tottenham Hotspur 3-2 on aggregate.

But McGarry was axed when the club was relegated in 1976.

His No 2, Sammy Chung, took over and restored them to the First Division at the first attempt, later making way for John Barnwell in November 1978. He delivered Wolves' last major trophy, the League Cup in 1980.

Wolves went into almost-terminal decline under the ownership of the Bhatti brothers. Barnwell resigned and the team were relegated under Ian Greaves, although Graham Hawkins did take them back into the top-flight.

He left after they went down again, with Tommy Docherty later shown the door as they headed for three rel-

egations in a row. McGarry lasted just 61 days of his second spell, with chief scout Sammy Chapman pushed into the role. Brian Little then had a spell as caretaker.

Graham Turner's appointment dragged Wolves off their knees, overseeing two promotions and the Sherpa Van Trophy win at Wembley in 1988.

Sir Jack Hayward bought the club and vowed to restore them to the top-flight again, with Turner removed for former England coach Graham Taylor in March 1994. Taylor, Mark McGhee and Colin Lee all spent Sir Jack's millions and failed to deliver, before Dave Jones got it right through the play-offs in 2003.

They were relegated after one season in the Premier League and Jones was sacked in November 2004, with another former England chief in Glenn Hoddle named as his successor.

He stepped down in May 2006, paving the way for Mick McCarthy's arrival. He took them up as champions and kept them in the Premier League for two campaigns.

Terry Connor, the ill-fated Stale Solbakken and Dean Saunders couldn't prevent a double relegation, with Jackett arriving in May 2013 as Wolves began life in League One.



Sir Jack and Dave Jones celebrate promotion



Graham Turner and legend Steve Bull



Bill McGarry had a successful first spell

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Heathens to maintain run, says Morris

ASHLEY Morris is backing Cradley to preserve their unbeaten Monmore record when they face King's Lynn next Monday.

Morris, who has been in blistering form on his return to the club, points to the improvement shown by the team in their opening two meetings.

And he says there is plenty more to come from the revamped Heathens, who include youngsters with little experience in league racing.

He said: "We want to try and keep that improvement going against King's Lynn. They have a solid side but if everyone can just keep moving forwards then we should be fine.

"If everyone carries on gaining confidence with every meeting like they are at the minute then we are only going to get better.

"I'm really enjoying my time back with the Heathens, it feels like I've never been away and all the lads are getting on great together.

"The fans are obviously pleased with what they're seeing and we can't thank them enough for their support."

Morris has enjoyed a spectacular return to National League racing, dropping just one point in his opening two meetings. He has also been boosted by a temporary move to Scunthorpe in the Premier League as he eyes as much track time as possible.

With no fixture clashes with Cradley, he believes the Heathens will also reap the rewards as he aims to seize his opportunity in the second tier.

"I've got a chance to ride for Scunthorpe now which is a good chance to get me some more meetings and get back riding in the Premier League," he said.

"It doesn't clash with any of my Cradley meetings and the fact I'll be riding more can only help me to ride better."

Yeltz get into the Grove thanks to a convincing win

Halesowen Town 3 Grantham Town 0
HALESOWEN rounded off their home fixtures with a comprehensive three-goal victory over mid-table Grantham. The victory meant Halesowen have already equalled last season's points tally with two away games remaining.

Tyree Clarke grabbed the Yeltz lead in the ninth minute with a fine low finish across goalkeeper Jake Turner into the bottom corner.

Halesowen doubled their lead a minute before the break after Malcolm Melvin was brought down in the penalty area. Although Melvin's spot-kick was saved brilliantly in the bottom corner by Turner, Anderson lofted the ball back across from the left over the stranded keeper for captain Jay Denny to head home his first goal of the season.

The Yeltz made it 3-0 in the 78th minute when a 20 yard right wing free-kick from Aaron Griffiths sailed straight into the net past Turner through a crowded goalmouth.

The Gingerbreads applied some late pressure but the Yeltz defended strongly.

Boss sure his Glassboys can hack it

Stourbridge 2 Whitby Town 0

STOURBRIDGE boss Gary Hackett feels his team are well-equipped to cope with the pressure of the final two games of the regular season.

The Glassboys couldn't clinch a place in the Evo-Stik Premier play-offs despite a strong second-half performance which saw two superb goals. Workington's victory at Ashton means Stourbridge may need to beat Frickley away tonight (Thursday) to make sure.

But Hackett said his team were doing everything they could to secure a play-off place and were more than capable of seeing the job through. He said: "Yes there's pressure, but I think we are capable of coping."

Stourbridge 2 Whitby Town 0

In reality, The Glassboys have at least guaranteed the issue will go to the last game, a mouth-watering clash at Amblecote on Saturday against third-placed Salford City.

Resilient Whitby threatened to take a first-half lead and Michael Roberts hit the bar. Kristian Green did the groundwork for the opener on 62 minutes, providing the pass for Chris Lait to smash home from outside the area.

The second on 72 was a virtuoso effort from Justin Richards, who picked up a loose ball in the

box, turned a half circle and lobbed it into the top corner.

David McTiernan was sent off for the visitors with nine minutes left for a second booking.

Stourbridge striker Karl Hawley scooped a hat-trick of goals at the Evo-Stik League awards evening, including the main honour of the night.

The Glassboys striker was named Premier Division Player of the Season after a vote by all 24 club managers. He also picked up the Supporters' Player of the Season award, winning a Facebook poll ahead of last season's winner Robbie Dale of Blyth Spartans. The 34-year-old was also named in the Premier Division team of the season.

HOME FIXTURES END IN DEFEAT

Stourbridge 10 Sale 23
IN a game they will be keen to forget, Stour's yo-yo form took a downward turn and the visitors helped themselves to four vital league points in their scrap for National 2 North survival.

A late rally produced a try for replacement Joe Bridger, but they were turned over at the death chasing the game and Sale secured victory with a breakaway try for winger John O'Donnell.

Poor handling meant Stour's attacks frequently stalled, they were forced to chase the game as they got on the wrong end of the penalty count and were punished by the boot of Sale outside-half Liam McGovern.

Sale were first on the scoreboard when McGovern slotted home 14 minutes in. Outside half Chris Scott bagged three points to level.

Sale secured their lineout throw just inside the Stour half and moved the ball right where a missed tackle put centre Chris Mayor clean through. The cover brought him down just short of the line but with the defences stretched Sale moved it wide again for flanker Tom Ailes to score. McGovern slotting a difficult conversion.

Stour, trailing 10-3, enjoyed the wind advantage in the second half, but made poor use of it as the game got scrappier and the penalty count mounted up. McGovern extended Sale's lead with two more penalties.

The referee's patience ran out and flanker Joe Carpenter was despatched to the sinbin on 71 minutes for playing the ball on the floor. With time running out Stour upped the tempo and started to run from deep, a late hit on centre Joe Heatley by Sale scrum half Sam Stelmazek also earning him a rest in the sinbin. Stour pressed the attack and finally worked Bridger over in the corner.

From the restart, a penalty award was tapped and worked right but the ball carrier was stripped by O'Donnell who raced untouched from his own 22 to secure the visitors' victory.

Having played all their home fixtures, Stour are on the road for their final two encounters, facing Lutonians on Saturday and champions Macclesfield the following week.

Nancy masters athletics events



Triple silver medallist Nancy Hitchmough

A DUDLEY athlete picked up three silver medals at a masters meeting – missing out on one gold by just four hundredths of a second.

Nancy Hitchmough, of Dudley and Stourbridge AC, collected the medals in the W65 age group at the European Indoor Masters Championships in Italy.

In the 800m Nancy ran an excellent time of 2min 52.78sec just missing out on gold.

Three days later, in the 1500, Nancy found herself forced to lead the race, only to be pipped over the last 100m in 5min 52.8.

As part of the W65 GB 4x200 relay team Nancy returned to the track to gain another silver medal as the team finished second to the very good German team.

Meanwhile, a small group of Dudley and Stourbridge runners took part in the Fordhouse 5k run last Friday night. In wet and muddy conditions Dave Nation was first back for the club in fourth place in a time of 17min 38sec.

Under-15 athlete Harry Walters had a great run for 11th in 18.46, with club coach Darrell Bodin in 22nd with 19.45.

Two more under-15 athletes completed DASH's runners as Adam Bodin came in 40th in 21.11, with Erin Owen 60th in a time of 22.57.

Humphreys Cup retained by chess club

IN Dudley division one, Stourbridge Chess Club faced Halesowen on Monday for their final match in this division. Stourbridge were outgraded on every board except for board 4 where Halesowen fielded a strong ungraded player.

Theoretically Halesowen should have won but Stourbridge thumped Halesowen 3½-½ with wins for Eric Horwill, Sam Bradley and Jeremy Humphries. This result meant there was a three-way tie for first in the division but Stourbridge were confirmed as Dudley Division 1 Champions because they had won more individual games.

Also on Monday the Birmingham & District Chess League Rules and Disputes Committee upheld Stourbridge's complaint that South Birmingham had not played in strength order in their division tie. Stourbridge were awarded the match, but this was not enough to save them from relegation.

The second team won their match against St Georges in the third division of the Birmingham League by default and now finish mid table with a 50 per cent record.

Thursday night was Cup Final night. Stourbridge played against Brewood in the Wolverhampton League Humphreys Cup. This is for players graded under 130.

Brewood had a decent team, but so did Stourbridge – and they won. Sam Bradley won on board 1 with Jeremy Humphries, Colin Woodall and Martin Berridge all drawing. SCC retains the trophy that it also won last season.

Anyone interested in playing chess at Stourbridge chess club is asked to contact Dave Scriven on 01384 423642 for more information or visit www.stourbridgechess.f9.co.uk.

Franklin pots way to five-time success

KEV Franklin (West Mids Police) won the Stourbridge & District Snooker League singles handicap final for the fifth time in the competition's eight-year history.

He beat Alan Jeffries of Kingswinford Cons, who received a 66-point start, 3-0 at Amblecote Institute.

In the three-a-side handicap final for the Charlie Randle Memorial Cup at Kingswinford Conservative Club, Amblecote Institute beat defending champions Baggeridge Social, who conceded an 18-point start, by 269-234.

In the team knock-out handicap cup final at Stourbridge Institute, Kinver Constitutional B, with a handicap of 124, scored 374, losing out to Stourbridge Old Edwardians, who scored 484 with a 178 handicap, and lifted the 'double'.

★★★

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